THE CHURCH'S RETURN POLICY: EQUIPPING
THE LAITY TO MINISTER
TO EX-OFFENDERS

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M. Div., Virginia Union University, 2001

Mentors
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ABSTRACT

THE CHURCH'S RETURN POLICY: EQUIPPING

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by

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The context for this ministry project is the Gethsemane Community Fellowship Baptist Church in Norfolk, Virginia. The writer addresses the inability of the church to provide ministry that addresses the needs of ex-offenders. A qualitative research methodology consisting of a test group of ten church members was designed to study the knowledge and attitudes of their about the needs of ex-offenders and to develop a training model to equip the church to provide ex-offender after-care ministry. Analysis of the data reflected an increased understanding of the needs of ex-offenders and the role of the church in this social action ministry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I am pleased to dedicate this work to my darling wife, Sharon Houston, and to my children, Sharonja (J'syiah) and Kirk Jr. You have been a wonderful source of inspiration and I thank God for you.

To my parents Roger and Gloria Evans for my Godly training and upbringing. Finally, in honor of my grandparents, the late Rev. and Mrs. Susie A. Hammond, I give God the glory.

ABBREVIATIONS

KJV	King James Version
UTS	United Theological Seminary
STOP	Southeastern Tidewater Opportunity Project
GCFBC	Gethsemane Community Fellowship Baptist Church

INTRODUCTION

This writer is the founder and senior pastor of the Gethsemane Community Fellowship Baptist Church (GCFBC) located in Norfolk, Virginia, and serves as the Chaplain for the Norfolk Sheriff's Office. The writer's experience as a pastor and a correctional chaplain have created within him a passionate concern for the rate of recidivism among offenders and the lack of concern by the church for such a growing problem. The writer's concern has also been influenced by the impact that the GCFBC has had in the lives of ex-offenders, and what he believes to be the responsibility of the church as an agent of reconciliation to people who have become disconnected from their communities and their relationship with God. Since 1996, this writer has sought ways to develop relationships with local churches that would provide a network of spiritual and social resources for men and women returning home from jail or prison. The writer's experience in this endeavor has been shocking and enlightening. The writer has found a reality among pastors and churches ranging from unconcern to a lack of knowledge and understanding related to the needs of ex-offenders and the potential role of the church to address this growing problem. Additionally, the writer has found that many pastors and laypersons see crime and recidivism as a political and social phenomenon, and they are not cognizant of the spiritual importance of the issue. The writer attributes this problem more to the latter, and hopes that providing a training model that will educate and prepare

laypersons to minister to ex-offenders will create a deeper level of sensitivity and a greater sense of responsibility to this plight.

The six chapters of this document will summarize the writer's endeavor to develop such a model with respect to theological and sociological underpinnings. The training model will provide comprehensive training in the following areas: Understanding the Needs of Ex-Offenders, Assessment and Screening, Ministering to the Spiritual Needs of Ex-Offenders, Resource Identification and Collaborative Partnerships, Mentoring, Empowering Ex-Offenders, and Understanding Health, Mental Health and Substance Abuse problems.

This dissertation examines the following areas in the foregoing sections. Chapter One, *"Ministry Focus,"* presents the writer's spiritual and professional journey, experiences, gifts and passions that have given birth to this project.

Chapter Two, "The State of the Art in this Ministry Model," centers on a review of literature related to the problems and issues of offender reintegration and the role of the faith-based organizations in this field. The discussion also includes the dearth of ministry models in the area of ex-offender aftercare ministry.

Chapter Three, *"Theoretical Foundation,"* provides insight into the theological and biblical foundations for this model of ministry, with special emphasis on the theology of reconciliation.

Chapter Four, *"Methodology"* and Five *"Field Experience"* focuses on the qualitative methodology, the pre and posttest questionnaires and the implementation of training model used in the field experience.

Chapter Six, *"Reflection, Summary, and Conclusion,"* includes the writer's findings, thoughts and suggestions regarding the project. Furthermore, the writer expounds on how this model can be implemented and used in the local church.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

December 7, 1941 was a day that changed the life of America. What began as a quiet, peaceful morning at Pearl Harbor quickly became a tragic, deadly nightmare. While sailors were servicemen aboard Naval vessels stationed at Pearl Harbor were going about normal Sunday morning routines, Japanese pilots were in route on suicide missions that would begin World War II. Exactly twenty years later, to the day, December 7, 1961, this writer was born in a small city on the southern gulf coast of Florida to a single mother of one son whose life was in a world-wind change. Because of growing economic challenges and a need for stability, the family relocated from Ft. Meyers, Florida to Sarasota, Florida in December of 1962 to be closer to his grandparents. The writer's earliest recollections of what would prove later to be a wonderful journey of preparation for life and ministry were born at that time. A strong Christian family comprised of a loving and committed mother, a grandfather who was a pastor and model husband and father, and a grandmother who was a matriarch extraordinaire, would provide the writer with a strong and stable foundation for personal and spiritual growth and development. Since the age of five, the writer recalls what seemed to be an unusual appreciation and passion for the word and worship of God. Sunday school, Sunday worship, revival services and Baptist Training Union were woven into the fabric of everyday life. On a Sunday morning in June 1969, at the age of seven years old, the writer accepted the Lord

Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. During the years that followed, a passion for the preached word continued to grow as the writer sat under such fiery preachers as his grandfather the Reverend Richard Hammond, Reverend Robinson, Rev. Grimesly, Rev. Weaver and Reverend I.H. Readon. The inspiration and influence of those men of God would set ablaze an undying fire for ministry that would burn for many years to come. Additionally, the writer's understanding and appreciation for pastoral ministry was enhanced by the countless hours spent with his grandfather in home and hospital visitation ministering to the "sick and shut-in" members of the congregation. Although the writer enjoyed a "normal" childhood, his love for listening to sermon tapes by noted preachers and reading the philosophy of Socrates and Plato, narrowed his interest to philosophy and religion. As the writer grew into the teen years, a greater sense and awareness of the call to ministry became evident. Invitations and opportunities to speak at Youth events became frequent, and even the writer's peers would recognize and acknowledge the hand of God upon his life.

After graduation from high school in 1979, the writer enlisted in the United States Navy where he served for eight years. International travel, marriage, starting a family and relocating to Norfolk, Virginia, in 1983 followed. Also during that time, while stationed in Brooklyn, New York, the writer accepted his call to ministry and was licensed by the Reverend Joseph J. Howell at the Faith Baptist Church in Hempstead, Long Island. After relocating to Norfolk, Virginia, the writer served as an associate minister of the Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church, under the leadership of Dr. Ronnie D. Joyner, and as the Youth Pastor of the Abyssinia Baptist Church, under the leadership of Dr. Frank Guns. Simultaneously, the writer began his formal education at the Tidewater Community

College, studying Administration of Justice. At the end of an eight year military career in 1987, the writer was called to the pastorate at the New Hope Baptist Church in a rural community of Suffolk, Virginia. The five years (1987-1992) of serving in that community would prove to be an invaluable experience that afforded the writer the opportunity to develop in all aspects of parish ministry. Concurrently, in 1990 the writer also became employed with the Norfolk Sheriff's Office as a GED instructor and would later become the Chaplain and Inmate Rehabilitation Coordinator of that institution. Shortly thereafter, in September 1992, the writer resigned the pastorate of New Hope Baptist Church and founded the Gethsemane Community Fellowship. Between 1996 and 2001 three significant events would shape the future of the writer's life and ministry. In 1996 the writer was appointed as the Chaplain Inmate Rehabilitation Coordinator of the Norfolk Sheriff's Office; in 1997 the Gethsemane Community Fellowship relocated from Portsmouth, Va. to Norfolk, Va. (1/2 mile from the Norfolk jail); and in May 2001 the writer graduated from the Samuel D. Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University in Richmond Va. These events would later prove to be watershed movements in the life of the writer and church.

A Growing Congregation

In this new location the Gethsemane Community Fellowship was primed for growth. Located just two blocks from Norfolk State University, an historical black university with a student enrollment of approximately 6,000 students, one half mile from the Norfolk City Jail, and in the middle of a growing and rapidly changing lower class community, the church would have an opportunity to design and deliver ministry to

mixture of different social and economic classes of people. The immediate community environment has been revitalized from a poor, drug-infested neighborhood into a lower-middle class working community. New single-family homes ranging from $150,000 to $300,000 have replaced old dilapidated homes, and financing programs for first time home owners have made it affordable for persons who otherwise would not be able to purchase homes. Community demographics are located in Appendix A. Additionally, Norfolk State University has expanded its services by constructing a new Science and Technology building that will also include a community youth program component. In the midst of such fertile ground for urban and inner city ministry the GCF has grown to an average weekly attendance of over 600 worshipers. Since 1990, the writer has observed the trends of recidivism and its direct relationship to the presence or absence of prerelease rehabilitation programs and post-release reentry programs. Additionally, the writer has observed the differences in the effectiveness of faith-based programs and more traditional therapeutic approaches to rehabilitation. As a result of the writer's work in corrections rehabilitation, his awareness of the growing number of men and women caught in the cycle of criminal conduct and institutionalization, and the importance of faith in the process of restoration, the GCFBC has accepted the burden of the responsibility to minister to the offender and ex-offender population.

GCF is a relatively young congregation with an average age of approximately thirty five. Additionally, many of them are new converts with no prior church affiliation. As a result they are open to nontraditional approaches to ministry, and are very zealous about learning and growing in the word. The youthful nature of our church also provides a promising and exciting future with the potential to impact our community in many

ways. The following information is data resulting from a survey of 188 members of the congregation.
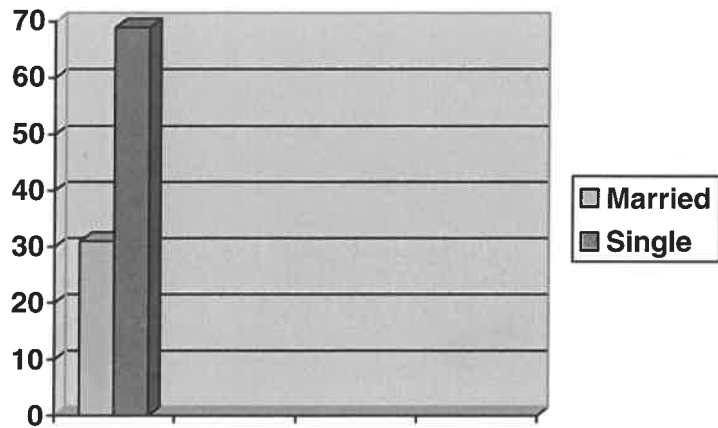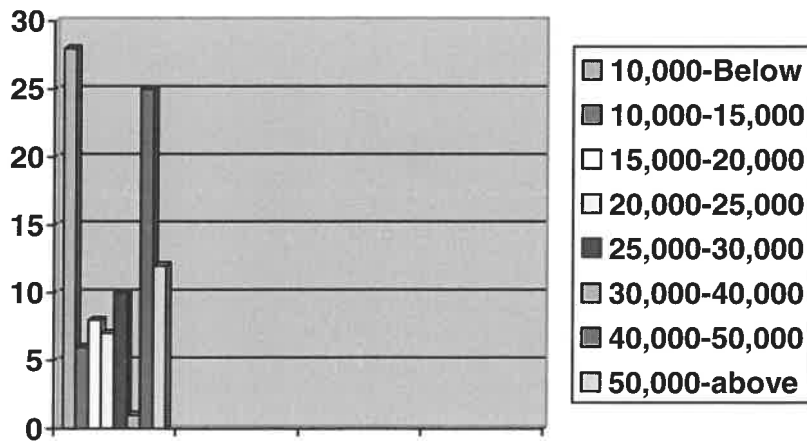
Church Demographics

Figure 1 Marriage Statistics

Figure 2 Income Averages

A Forgotten Congregation

Less than one half mile from this community of promise is a jail that houses on average 1700 inmates (2006). At the time of this writing there were 1791 persons incarcerated in the Norfolk Jail. The following is a statistical analysis of the jail's population: 82% are African American and 16% are White and 4% are Hispanic or other. Ninety one percent are males and 9.6% are females. Nearly 80% of the total population is parole or probation violators. These individuals may or may not have committed another crime, but they have been previously incarcerated and released. In this dissertation the writer will address the implications of these and other growing trends in America's Criminal Justice System and how the church must respond to this social crisis.

In this institution, like so many others throughout America, men and women suffer from substance abuse problems, lack of education, mental health concerns, and a plethora of other personal and social challenges. Since serving as the chaplain for the jail, the writer has become acquainted with the nationally growing problem of recidivism. Despite the rehabilitation programs that are offered in the jail that focuses on life-skills, education, substance abuse, and moral and spiritual development, a large percentage of the men and women released from jail return to lives of crime, poverty, and substance abuse. Consequently, the writer has sought to develop networks that would provide a system of support specifically designed for this population.

In 2000 the writer designed an aftercare ministry for ex-offenders at the GCF called the Joshua Ministry. The name was inspired by the role and assignment Joshua was given as the successor to Moses. When the children of Israel were delivered from Egyptian bondage they entered into a period of transition for 40 years. During the years

of wandering God would teach them his ways and his statues and prepare them for the land of promise. After the death of Moses, it became the responsibility of Joshua to lead them into the land of promise and guide them into conquering and settling in the land. When men and women are released from jail or prison they are in need of a "Joshua" who can lead them from pain and purposelessness to purpose and productivity. The Joshua Ministry consisted of the following components: Life-Skills Development, Employment Preparation, Essential Needs (shelter, food, and clothing), Substance Abuse Support Groups, and Educational Development. However, the ministry proved to be only moderately successful and the writer attributed this fact to the lack of training provided to the leaders and workers in the ministry, as well as lack of networking relationship and partnerships with other vital community agencies and organizations. However, as a result of the writer's work with this population, the number of GCF members who are employed at the Norfolk City Jail, and the sensitivity of the church to their needs many of the ex-offenders become a part of the ministry upon their release.

Additionally, the writer organized a program to invite pastors and lay-leaders of the local churches to the jail for a tour and informational session on incarceration and the challenges of offender reentry. The invitation was offered through letters and follow-up phone calls. The writer was both surprised and disappointed at the lack of interest and low response by the local Christian Community.

The writer's knowledge, experience, and passion for ex-offender reentry and has become the impetus for this work and research.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT

In the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Luke the Lord Jesus Christ proclaims His purpose for coming into the world. He states, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (St. Luke 4:18-19 [KJV]). When the Lord ascended back into heaven and sent His spirit to dwell in the hearts of believers, His mission became the mission of the church. The church is anointed and appointed to continue the saving, redeeming work of Christ in the world, and to demonstrate His life-giving love in a world of pain and death. This ministry is not to be limited to those who have accepted Christ as savior and are members of the local Christian church, but to reach out beyond the sacred precincts of the Christian community to all who are broken and hurting. This ministry of the church is commonly referred to as social ministry. The concern of this writer is the consciousness and response of the church to a pervasive social ill that the church has remained relatively silent on. "Each calendar year more than one hundred thousand men and women are released from America's prisons and jails and return to cities and suburbs. Do they return

to society better or worse? What happens to them in the months and years following their release? This is a vital question both for society and for the church."[1] The church has both a unique ability and a biblical mandate to demonstrate concern to this troubled population. The church has a biblical mandate because "as Christian congregations we are called to care. Only by reviving the biblical understanding of Christian service can the social ministry of the church be fostered."[2] The writer has learned from serving as an inner city pastor and as a jail chaplain that motivating and mobilizing churches to participate in this social ministry can be very difficult and challenging. For the purpose of this dissertation the definition provided by Derell R. Watkins is his book *Christian Social Ministry* is helpful. He states, " *social ministry* is an organized process used by redeemed individuals who are called by God to proclaim the good news, demonstrating Christ's concern for the spiritual, physical, emotional, mental, and relational well-being of persons, families, groups, and communities both inside and outside the community of faith."[3] The crisis of reentry affects individuals in all of these areas. There are physical, social, and emotional issues associated with transitioning from incarceration back into the community, and it affects the families as well as the communities of which ex-offenders are a part. Watkins provides an insightful explanation on the various domains of life aforementioned. He states that "the spiritual domain has to do with the ability of the person to celebrate wholeness or completeness in the presence and work of God in his or her life which results in a growing and satisfying relationship with God and God's

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[1] Donald Smarto, *Keeping Ex-offenders Free! An Aftercare Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 11.

[2] Robert Kysar, *Called To Care: Biblical Images for Social Ministry* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), vii.

[3] Derrel R. Watkins, *Christian Social Ministry: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994), x.

church, people, Word, and creation. The mental and emotional domains of life refer to

education, reasoning, problem solving, and emotional stability. The physical domain

includes health or the absence of control of disease affecting the body. Income, savings,

and employment are factors in the economic domain. The relational domain includes

family, friends and community.[4] In consideration of these domains the church seeks to

provide ministry in the areas of enrichment, prevention and treatment. Robert Kysar

believes that "the social ministry of the church aims at the empowerment of all people,

particularly those who have been robbed of power by social structures."[5] Ex-offenders

are some of the most powerless individuals in society with less rights and privileges than

any other population in America. Kysar also believes that in order for congregations to be

effective in social ministry they must often overcome many phobias. Kysar divides these

phobias into the categories of theological and practical. This writer addresses the

theological in the Chapter Three of this work. However, in the practical category, Kysar

suggests that congregations may experience the following thoughts: "they are taking over

our church, this job is too big for us, people will not like this, we will help the wrong

people, or is this our mission?"[6] The writer agrees with this assertion of Kysar, especially

as it relates to the peculiar nature of this project. These feelings and questions are normal

and sometimes necessary to negotiate as ministry to ex-offenders is embraced. For some

congregations, the concern is the accepting ex-offender will change the homogeneous

character of the congregation, especially where educational, economic and social status is

concerns. Kysar adds, "If the social ministry of the church threatens the comfortable

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[4] Ibid., xi.

[5] Kysar, *Called to Care: Biblical Images for Social Ministry,* 133.

[6] Ibid., 130, 133, 136, 137.

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homogeneity of the congregation, then it enables us to be the community the gospel calls us to be. If it means that those people are going to take over our church, perhaps that is what is required by life in the body of Christ in this particular time and place."[7] In their book *Saving Souls and Serving Society: Understanding the Faith Factor in Church-Based Social Ministry* Heidi Unruh and Ronald Sider assert that "Congregations in low-income neighborhoods tend toward more social service activity than those higher income areas. The significance of the material aid, economic empowerment, and political advocacy sponsored by black churches is indisputable, owing in part to the uniquely situated role of the black church as the foremost economic and social institution within the African American community."[8] Putting all of this into context, Cnaan, Boddie, and Yancey (2003, 115) cautions against reducing congregational involvement to statistical variables. Given that most congregations are involved in at least one social service program, the distinction between the high performers and the low performers is not mediated by budget, size, membership, or theology. Rather it is mediated by the congregation's commitment to faith-based action and a tradition of congregational care."[9]

The notion that this particular social task is too big for us is understandable in light of the complex nature of ex-offender reentry ministry. One of the ways congregations can respond to and overcome the complexity of social problems is in networking-linking congregation to with other social agencies and organizations in an effort to respond to specific social needs. Kysar embraces the principle that "Social

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[7] Ibid., 132.

[8] Heidi Rolland Unruh and Ronald J. Sider, *Saving Souls, Serving Society* (Oxford, England: University Press, 2005), 7.

[9] Ibid., 8.

ministry begins and ends in the expression of faith and confidence in the power of God to do exceedingly more than we can do."[10]

In addition to being a very complex issue, ministry to ex-offenders is also a controversial issue. The political components and debates of restorative justice and victim rights contribute to the controversy surrounding this issue. There are many different opinions about the problem of reentry and how the church should respond to it. Ex-offender reentry ministry may be considered a ministry of advocacy. Kysar writes that, "Advocacy is an important part of the church's ministry to society that purports to speak on behalf of those whose voices may not be heard in the places of power. It attempts to come to the side of those in need to promote reform that will enhance their welfare."[11] For some, to provide support for "ex-convicts" is to advocate on behalf of those whose lifestyle is regarded as sinful and immoral. The church must be able and willing to accept the diversity of opinions if it is to be effective in the area of social ministry.

Abuse of services is also a concern of churches involved in the arena of social ministry. The very nature of ex-offender ministry provokes a mindset of skepticism. Because of the stigma attached to formerly incarcerated individuals, those who provide services to them are often cautious of the deceitful and sometimes manipulative conduct often associated with a criminal lifestyle. While this reservation is normal, it should remind service and ministry providers to administer programs realistically and wisely.

Despite the fears, concerns and inhibitions that accompany social ministry in the church, the changing nature of social services and welfare reforms is necessitating a response from the church. Unruh and Sider list four aspects of the broader sociopolitical

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[10] Kysar, *Called to Care: Biblical Images for Social Ministry*, 136.

[11] Ibid., 137.

context that have particular implications for studying the spiritual dimensions of congregational outreach and social ministry. The implications of "devolution, faith-based initiatives, changing norms in religion in public life, and ambivalence toward proselytizing"[12] have all caused a shift in the paradigm of social ministry. The government is now looking to the church to provide answers and assistance in many areas of welfare reform including ex-offender reentry. This ideology highlights the motif of *devolution* in the discourse on the changing relationships between among various actors in the social welfare arena. Unruh and Sider explain that "devolution refers to the decentralization of the social safety net and the transfer of social responsibilities to the private sector, a trend that Cnaan, Wineburg, and Boddie calls a "newer deal"--reversing the New Deal Welfare policies that emerged from the Depression and reached their political apex in the 1960s. The movement toward devolution gained momentum in the 1980s with a resurgence of local community-minded social strategies, supported by the policies and rhetoric of Ronald Reagan. This legislation, adopted under the Clinton administration, "devolved" welfare responsibility to the states through block grants and encouraged grassroots faith-based social services through the provision known as charitable choice."[13] Derrick Davis and Hankins, in their book *Welfare Reform and Faith-Based Initiatives* maintain that "in the United States, as elsewhere, despite much disillusionment with government social programs and an upsurge of interest in voluntary action and religious charities, the actual movement is not to dismantle the "nanny state" and to turn the poor over to private charities and the churches. Rather the search is to find

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[12] Unruh and Sider, *Saving Souls, Serving Society*, 9.

[13] Ibid., 10.

or create greater cooperation between government's welfare efforts and the programs offered by the nongovernmental sector, including its many faith-based organizations." [14] This approach enables churches to partner with the government and in social ministry networking and retain their distinctive values. The idea and realization that society's problems have a moral and spiritual root has called for a faith-sensitive approach. It is the belief of Unruh and Sider that "private sector efforts, especially faith-based ones, are inherently more effective and can mobilize resources with greater efficiency."[15] Furthermore, according to Unruh and Sider "some advocates of devolution additionally call for the *re-moralization* of American charity. Re-moralization, in practice, thus entails a personal, value-laden approach to social-service delivery, such as that presumably offered by congregations and other grassroots faith-based organizations. Re-moralization reintroduces the tenets that charitable aid should promote moral values, hold persons accountable for their choices, require persona to take responsibility for their recovery, and uphold familial and community networks as the first lines of assistance."[16] This writer believes that this moral framework is ideal for delivering ministry to ex-offenders.

In addition to devolution and re-moralization, faith-based initiatives have also affected the shift in the social ministry arena. This initiative was charged with providing access to funding for religious groups that were interested. "The public discourse on this initiative has clustered around three areas of disputation: constitutional (is government funding of faith-based groups legal?), pragmatic (is it good for society?), and ecclesiastic

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[14] Derek Davis and Barry Hankins, *Welfare Reform and Faith-Based Organizations* (Waco, TX: J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, 1999), 31.

[15] Unruh and Sider, *Saving Souls, Serving Society*, 10.

[16] Ibid., 11.

(is it good for the church?)."[17] Advocates contend that faith-based initiatives corrects years of governmental bias against faith-based organizations and reinstates the protection of the autonomy of religious groups. Unruh and Sider suggest that "it appears that congregations (particularly African American churches), along with other smaller, grassroots religious organizations, now have a limited but growing presence in the public funding arena. The extent of these partnerships will be constrained, however, by limits in organizational capacity, by religious groups' openness to government funding, and by potential legal and legislative challenges to faith-based initiatives."[18]

Another consideration for churches and ex-offender ministry is the changing attitudes toward religion's role in society. Educators, sociologist and psychologist are beginning to recognize and acknowledge the importance of the moral and spiritual dimension of humanity. Three-fourths of citizens believe that congregations contribute significantly to solving America's social problems. As minister-journalist Roy Larson commented, "Our secular, scientific, rational world view is coming apart because it doesn't the wholeness of reality. America is on a quest for spiritual meaning."[19] For example, with regards to the world of politics, Professors Randy Lee and Marci Hamilton offer diametrically opposed normative and descriptive assessments of the role of religion in politics. "Normatively, Lee believes that in our constitutional system, religion should be an active player in political affairs. Hamilton contends that the role of religion should be more circumscribed. Descriptively, Lee believes that religion has been inappropriately

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[17] Ibid., 13.

[18] Ibid., 15.

[19] Ibid., 16.

marginalized in American political life. Hamilton asserts that if anything, religion has been too active a participant in the political scene. Lee and Hamilton, however, share one common point of agreement. Lee, explicitly, and Hamilton, implicitly, both recognize that religion can be, and often is, a potent political force."[20] In the field of reentry there is little disagreement concerning the role of religion in the rehabilitation of offenders. Studies have shown that inmates who participate in faith-based programs recidivate at a far less rate.

The final aspect of the sociopolitical context for consideration is the ambivalence toward proselytizing. There are basically two competing voices in this discourse on faith-based social ministries. "One side (including some who are not themselves religious) looks to the transforming potential of religious faith to bring moral order, hope, and a sense of purpose to the lives of struggling individuals. They assert that faith changes people's lives, makes them more whole persons and responsible citizens, and thus strengthens the social order. The other side (including some who consider themselves religious) voices a pervasive norm that considers proselytizing offensive or even harmful to the social order. Whether or not faith "works," they argue that it is wrong to impose one's faith on others, especially when those others are their most vulnerable."[21] These are the murky waters of social ministry that the church must navigate when serving ex-offenders in government partnerships.

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[20] William P. Marshall, "The Culture of Belief and the Politics of Religion," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 63, no 1-2 (2000): 453.

[21] Unruh and Sider, *Saving Souls, Serving Society*, 17.

What Is Prisoner Reentry?

Prisoner reentry is the process of leaving jail or prison and returning to society. Whether released to parole or probation or without any form of community supervision, all returning offenders experience reentry. In their book, *After Crime and Punishment,* Shadd Maruna and Russ Immarigeon utilize the term "reintegration" and they define it as "both an event and a process that begins the day that prisoner is released from confinement. By this larger definition reintegration encompasses many aspects of processes that go by names such as 'corrections,' 'rehabilitation,' 'treatment', and the like."[22] More people are leaving prisons across the country to return to their families and communities than at any other time in our history. Nationally, over 600,000 individuals will be released from state and federal prisons this year, a fourfold increase over the past two decades. From a number of perspectives, the issue of how people fare after they exit the prison gates has received renewed attention. Many will have difficulty managing the most basic ingredients for successful reintegration—reconnecting with jobs, housing, and their families, and accessing needed substance abuse and health care treatment. The cycle of imprisonment among large numbers of individuals, mostly minority men, is increasingly concentrated in urban communities that already encounter enormous social and economic advantages. Maruna and Immarigeon add that, "criminological research suggests that many of them, perhaps even the majority of them in some states, will not achieve anything resembling successful reintegration into society. For instance, of the 459,000 U.S, parolees who were discharged from community supervision in 2000, 42 percent were returned to incarceration-11 percent with a new sentence and 31 percent in

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[22] Shadd Marna and Russ Immarigeon, *After Crime and Punishment: Pathways to Offender Reintegration* (Cullompton, Devon UK: Willan Publishing, 2004), 5.

some other way (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2001). In a recent study 272,111 state

prisoners released in 1994, 67.5 per cent5 percent were rearrested within three years, as

compared to an estimated 62.5 per cent in a similar study of 1983 releases (Langan and

Levin 2002)."[23] Although inmates have always been released from prison, and officials

have long struggled with helping them succeed, the current situation has grown worse. In

his study *From Prison To Home: The Dimensions and Consequences of Prisoner*

Reentry, Jeremy Travis, Amy Solomon and Michelle Waul report that "Young, poor,

black males are incarcerated at higher rates than any other group, and therefore they are

most affected by reentry. The Bureau of Justice Statistics calculated that, in 1991, an

African-American male had a 29 percent lifetime chance of serving at least one year in

prison, six times higher than that for white males. Hispanic males, who may be of any

race, have a lifetime chance of imprisonment of 16 percent. Nine percent of African-

American males age 25 to 29 were in prison in 1999, compared with 3 percent of

Hispanic males and 1 percent of white males of the same age group. Further, according to

one estimate, more than one-third of young, black, male high school dropouts were in

prison or jail in the late 1990s—more than were employed. These high rates of

incarceration among African Americans have intergenerational consequences.

In a 1996 survey of black jail inmates, nearly half indicated that they had a family

member who had been incarcerated. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that children

of incarcerated parents are at high risk of future delinquency and/or criminal behavior.

Concentrations in removal and reentry of African-American men also have implications

for family formation and stability. In some communities, high rates of incarceration,

homicide, and limited employment prospects among African-American males have

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[23] Marna and Immarigeon, *After Crime and Punishment: Pathways to Offender Reintegration*, 6.

resulted in an imbalance of marriageable African-American males to females. Some researchers argue that severely imbalanced gender ratios are a predictor of family disruption and a greater likelihood of crime and violence."[24] These factors are important indicators for the necessary awareness and involvement of African American church in this social ill. Edward Rhine argues that, "it is critical to recognize that correctional systems cannot go it alone. To do so promises to repeat the failures of the past and guarantees continued high rates of offender recidivism. The Second Chance Act of 2005 clearly acknowledges the importance of taking a holistic approach when dealing with offenders returning home. In Ohio, Washington, and in many other states, innovative initiatives are under way that emphasize building a continuum of services, programming, support and offender accountability that extends from the time of sentencing well beyond release from prison to any period of supervision that may follow. The Second Chance Act of 2005 emphasizes that these strategies and initiatives must be developed in collaboration and partnership with community groups, faith-based organizations, service providers, citizens, victims and formerly incarcerated individuals. Their ownership and support at the local level are vital to achieving successful pathways for offender reentry."[25] Thomas O' Connor and Nathaniel Pallone cite Victoria Erickson in their book *Religion, the Community, and the Rehabilitation of Criminal Offenders* when she says "Explaining what motivates community people to intervene in the messy life stories and complicated social responses we call the "justice system" has pushed researchers into a

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[24] Jeremy Travis, Amy L. Solomon, and Michelle Waul, *From Prison To Home: The Dimensions of Consequences of Prisoner Reentry* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2003), 12.

[25] Edward E. Rhine, "Confronting Recidivism: Inmate Reentry and the Second Chance Act of 2005," *Corrections Today*, August 2005 [database on-line]; available from Questia, http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5011221621; Internet; accessed 25 August 2006.

language that sociologist seldom use or analyze because it is hard to measure. It is common for community corrections researchers and practitioners to use words like "mission, goodwill, virtue, peace, faith and spirit." These words describe the source of motivation that shapes the practice of community corrections. What connects socially conservative, liberal and radical people in community corrections is that source of their motivations is faith-the faith they have in people to respond to human caring. In spite of the fact that humans are not "indefinitely malleable," it is on holy or "secular faith that human nature permits the possibility of wide social cooperation to bring about a just and egalitarian society. In short, for many interventionist, the reclaiming and redeveloping of individuals has little to do with their psychological or sociological label and everything to do with building relationships that are accountable in a spiritual, ethical and moral context."[26]

Criminal behavior and lawlessness are moral, ethical and spiritual issues that must be addressed morally, ethically as well socially. In her book, *When Prisoner's Come Home,* Joan Petersilia explains that, "prisoner reentry is an incredibly complex and multifaceted problem. It involves tackling some of the central issues in contemporary crime policy; sentencing, prisons and prison release practices. It also requires us to revisit the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs and the government's responsibility in helping acquire new living and work skills."[27]

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[26] Thomas P. O'Connor and Nathaniel J. Pallone, *Religion, the Community, and the Rehabilitation of Criminal Offenders* (New York, NY: The Haworth Press, 2002), 233.

[27] Joan Petersilia, *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry* (Oxford, NY: University Press, 2003), 14.

Secular efforts alone at rehabilitation have proven unsuccessful in changing

lawbreakers and preventing recidivism, therefore the church must accept responsibility

for their role in reentry. For example, Reverend Judith Talbert, pastor of participating

Faith Tabernacle, was quoted: "We must have the inclusion of the church, family and the

community as well as government to bring permanent behavioral change."[28] "In 2000,

the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute launched an ongoing inquiry into prisoner

reentry research to better understand the pathways of successful reintegration, the social

and fiscal costs of current policies, and the impacts of incarceration and reentry on

individuals, families, and communities. Over the past six years, the Urban Institute's

reentry research portfolio has informed a broad set of policy and practice discussions

about the challenges facing former prisoners. The Institute's research includes a range of

studies, from rigorous program evaluations to strategic planning partnerships with state

and local jurisdictions."[29] The Urban Institute's cornerstone study, *Returning Home:*

Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry, is a multistate study that documents

the pathways of prisoner reintegration, examines what factors contribute to a successful

or unsuccessful reentry experience, and identifies how those factors can inform policy.

The researchers are also engaged in individual evaluations of faith-based and other

targeted reentry programs. Included in the study are roundtable forums that bring together

practitioners, faith-based and community leaders to develop new thinking on the issue of

prisoner reentry. In an article published by this institute, Omar Roberts of the University

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[28] Omar M. McRoberts, "Religion, Reform, Community: Examining the Idea of Church-based Prisoner Reentry," *The Urban Institute*. Available from www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=41802; Internet; accessed 24 August 2006.

[29] Amy Solomon, Christy Visher, Nancy La Vigne, and Jenny Osborne (eds.), "Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry: Research Findings From the Urban Institute's Prisoner Reentry Portfolio," *Urban Institute.* Available from http://urban.org/projects/reentry-portfolio/index.cfm; Internet; accessed 25 August 2006.

of Chicago, Department of Sociology suggests that, "much of the language of reentry recently has been organized around the concept of "reform," the transformation of criminal identities into licit ones. The idea is that the individual personality must change, and the individual psyche must recover from criminality, in order to prevent a relapse into anti-social behavior. It is no wonder that religious institutions have been raised as possible midwives of successful reentry. Time in prison is viewed as evidence of an individual's moral failure. Turning away from crime and incarceration, and toward a "productive" life, is thus a form of conversion."[30] However, in a document provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services, Administration for Children and Families an adversarial view is offered. Some argue the "religious programs are anathema to progressive penal practice. Opponents charge that religious programs in prisons are neither clinically relevant nor psychologically informed, and consider such pro-grams at odds with correctional treatment and therapeutic principles. This perspective views religious program activities as futile attempts to change people based on religious beliefs rather than rehabilitative standards. Other challengers suggest that certain religious program activities lack constitutional foundation (e.g., prayer and proselytizing) and have become graphic representations of the need to separate church and state, particularly in cases involving government funding. Others voice concern about the professional qualifications of religious program volunteers, suggesting a lack of specialized experience working with serious, violent, or youthful

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[30] Omar M. McRoberts, "Religion, Reform, Community: Examining the Idea of Church-based Prisoner Reentry," *Urban Institute*. Available from http://www.urban.org/uploaded PDF/410802_Religion.pdf; Internet; accessed 24 August 2006.

offenders."[31] While churches and other faith-based organizations may lack certain expertise in areas of mental health and psychological counseling, they do provide a moral framework for character building, spiritual healing, and a context for healthy relationships that promote positive change. Service providers should take into consideration the varied needs of ex-offenders, and thus, the different kinds of services that may very well be required. In her study titled *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development,* Carol Gilligan found that "moral and social integration went hand in hand, and that both were contingent upon the women's (ex-offender) self-worth. As their self-worth increased, the study participants in her study (1982) began to make responsible rather than selfish decisions, and therefore moved developmentally toward social participation, or shared norms and expectations."[32] In his work *Changing The Lawbreaker: The Treatment of Delinquents and Criminals,* Don C. Gibbons explains that "treatment can be lumped into two general classes: psychotherapies and environmental therapies. Psychotherapy types include individual 'depth' therapy, group psychotherapy, and client-centered therapy. Environmental therapy includes group therapy, milieu management, and environmental change."[33] The kind of intervention that churches and other faith-based groups are able to provide could be placed in the latter category. That is the ability to provide environments and surroundings that are conducive to social, emotional, and spiritual growth and

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[31] Jeanette Hercik, "Navigating a New Horizon: Promising Pathways to Prisoner Reintegration." *Caliber Associates.* Available from http://www.calib.com/home/work_samples/files/kairosissuebrief II.pdf; Internet; accessed 25 August 2006.

[32] Patricia O'Brien, *Making it in the "Free" World: Women in Transition from Prison* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), 56.

[33] Don C. Gibbons, *Changing the Lawbreaker: The Treatment of Delinquents and Criminals* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 142.

development and to become law-abiding citizens. One cannot ignore the fact that individuals returning home from jail or prison are normally in need of specialized care. Many individuals return home from incarceration damaged in one way or another. Donald Smarto's assertion is that "much of the damage is emotional and psychological. Ex-offenders commonly have attitudes of mistrust, anger and outright rebellion. Added to the weight of earlier experiences and pain, it can affect day-to-day functioning and result in negative behaviors that come from both conscious and subconscious sources."[34] Furthermore, offenders often suffer from post-traumatic reactions to the pains of imprisonment, a diminished sense of self-worth, and dependence upon institutional structure. At the very least, prison is painful, and incarcerated persons often suffer long-term consequences from having been subjected to pain, deprivation, and extremely atypical patterns and norms of living and interacting with others. To be sure, not everyone who is incarcerated is disabled or psychologically harmed by it. But few people are completely unchanged or unscathed by the experience. In his writing *The Effect of Social Environment Upon Former Felons* Dietrich C. Reitzes argues that "the successful adjustment of ex-convicts to law abiding citizens depends to a large extent upon the terms and conditions under which integration with conventional society becomes feasible. Such integration is not influenced by the past experiences and personality factors of the ex-convict only, but also by the specific situation in which the attempted adjustment takes place."[35]

Craig Haney offers great insight in his article *The Psychological Impact of Incarceration: Implications for Post-Prison Adjustment* where he states that:

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[34] Smarto, *Keeping Ex-offenders Free! An Aftercare Guide*, 14.

[35] Stephen Farall, ed., *The Termination of Criminal Careers* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 19.

No significant amount of progress can be made in easing the transition from prison to home until and unless significant changes are made in the way ex-convicts are treated to in the free-world communities from which they came. Specifically:

- Clear recognition must be given to the proposition that persons who return home from prison face significant personal, social, and structural challenges that they have neither the ability nor resources to overcome entirely on their own. Post-release success often depends of the nature and quality of services and support provided in the community, and here is where the least amount of societal attention and resources are typically directed. This tendency must be reversed.

- Gainful employment is perhaps the most critical aspect of post-prison adjustment. The stigma of incarceration and the psychological residue of institutionalization require active and prolonged agency intervention to transcend. Job training, employment counseling, and employment placement programs must all be seen as essential parts of an effective reintegration plan.

- A broadly conceived family systems approach to counseling for ex-convicts and their families and children must be implemented in which the long-term problematic consequences of 'normal' adaptations to prison life are the focus of discussion, rather than traditional models of psychotherapy.

- Parole and probation services and agencies need to be restored to their original role of assisting with reintegration. Here too the complexity of the transition from prison to home needs to be fully appreciated, and parole revocation should only occur after every possible community-based resource and approach has been tried.[36]

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[36] Craig Haney, "The Psychological Impacts of Incarceration: Implications for Post-Prison Adjustment," available from http://aspe.hhs.gov/HSP/prison2home02/Haney.htm; Internet; accessed 26 August 2006.

To understand the individual pathways of reintegration after prison release, one must also focus on the complex dynamic of the moment of release.[37] The complexities of reestablishing life after prison in the days and weeks after release are many and include the following: finding a place to live; securing formal identification; reestablishing ties with family; returning to high-risk places and situations; and the daunting challenge of finding a job, often with a poor work history and now, a criminal record. Most prison systems do little to facilitate a smooth transition from prison to community. In Illinois, "released prisoners receive $50, a set of clothes, and a bus ticket. One third of all state departments of corrections report that they do not provide any funds upon release."[38]

"It is important to note that since the beginning of prisons and jails, religion has influenced philosophies of punishment and rehabilitation. Whether motivated by religious beliefs or a sense of civic duty, the church has helped direct the course of modern corrections. For more than a century, the church had been relied upon to provide spiritual guidance and support to prisoners (and ex-offenders). The church has also provided, and continues to provide, a widespread of secular services to prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families. Traditionally, these services include the provision of food, shelter, and clothing." The writer agrees with Donald Smarto that "the church definitely needs to play an active, vital, and reality-based role in helping the offender readjust to life on the outside and continue to grow as a Christian."[39] Smarto adds that:

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[37] Christy A. Visher and Jeremy Travis, "Transitions from Prison to Community: Understanding Individual Pathways," *Annual Review of Sociology* 29 (2003) [database on-line]; available from Questia, http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5002051989; Internet; accessed 24 August 2006.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., 17.

He hopes to help churches:

- Understand what the offender is facing in trying to readjust to society and thus provide practical, balanced help.

- Cultivate the ex-offender's sense of accountability for personal sin and guide him toward accepting responsibility for personal behaviors.

- Direct and guard against ex-offender manipulations and game playing-for the protection of both the church members and the ex-offender.

- Assist the ex-offender in being an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ.[40]

Finally, involvement of the community sends a message to offenders that the community has a vested interest in their success. Released offenders come to understand that they have a place in the community, that they are accepted, that others in the community will provide support to facilitate their reintegration, and, by the same token, that the community is harmed by and will not tolerate negative behavior. Supportive involvement of the community goes a long way in breaking down the sense of stigma and alienation experienced by returning offenders. It can also provide the offender with the means for repairing past harms, and for altering behavior patterns that had been harmful to the community. Pat Nolan sums up this issue well in his work *When Prisoners Return Home:* "The world has largely given up on changing the behavior of ex-offenders. The church, on the other hand, believes in redemption. The church reaches out in love, embracing the offender while inviting them to repent of their sin and find forgiveness in Christ. The church also knows that it is important to hold offenders accountable for the

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[40] Ibid., 19.

harm they have done and to challenge them to make things right with their victim if possible. Most importantly, the church calls them to turn their live over to God for real transformation."[41]

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[41] Pat Nolan, *When Prisoners Return Home* (Merrifield, VA: Prison Fellowship, 2004), 4.

CHAPTER THREE

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

Ministry to ex-offenders, as a social ministry, finds its theological roots in

practical theology. Michael A. Cowan states that "Practical theology stresses the co

relational, hermeneutical, critical, and the transforming character of doing theology. This

is a co relational method because it works by holding two things in reciprocal

relationship--the vision and values of our religious traditions ("the world as is should be")

and the state of the actual world in which we live ("the world as it is"). It is a

hermeneutical method because it recognizes and highlights the role of interpretation in

reading our world and our traditions. It is a critical method because it requires that we

explicitly evaluate the inherited understandings that guide our interpretations and actions.

Finally, it is a transformational method because its constant concern is to bring the real

world into greater harmony with the Creator's intentions."[1] When the church views the

plight of ex-offenders and the families and communities they represent, through the lens

of practical theology it must ask the questions that are implicit in Michael Howard's

assertion. What is the state of the world as it relates to ex-offenders and reentry into

society? According to the values and visions of the Christian tradition, how

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[1] Michael A. Cowan, "Introduction to Practical Theology." Institute for Ministry, Loyola University, Available from http://www.loyno.edu/~mcowan/PracticalTheology.html; Internet; accessed 28 August 2006.

should it be? How does the church involve itself in the midst of the reality of reentry and become a transforming power for all who are affected by it? These are the preliminary considerations for theological foundation of the ministry of offender reentry. In his book, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Practical Theology* Ray Anderson quotes Gerben Heitink. Heitink states "practical theology deals with God's activity through the ministry of human beings."[1] It is the Lord who provides vision, power, and a moral framework for ministry; however, it is the purpose and role of the church to act on God's behalf. Additionally, it is the role of the church to remain sensitive to and aware of the issues of the world so that it can respond effectively to the various ills of society. Anderson presses this point more clearly when he suggests that "Practical theology, then is more than mere practice; it is a strategic perspective that links the hermeneutical with the empirical so as to achieve an integrative theological model that underlies the theological task as a whole."[2] This theology requires the church to be deliberate and practical in its approach to ministry. However, it is not a "knee-jerk," emotional response to reality, but it is born out of a critical analysis and understanding of God's desire and design for His people. Anderson also believes that Practical Theology is "the means whereby the day-to-day life of the church, in all its dimensions, is scrutinized in light of the gospel and related to the demands and challenges of the present day."[3] This is where the proverbial "rubber meets the road." The church was created for missions. The writer would argue that where there is no mission to the world, there is no legitimate

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[1] Ray S. Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 25.

[2] Ibid., 26.

[3] Ibid., 26.

church. The measure of the Christian church is based directly on its willingness to be Christ's transforming presence in the world. In his book *A Fundamental Practical Theology,* Don S. Browning argues that Practical Theology is "as a discipline practical theology has both a mission and ecclesial focus, set forth in that order. Mission precedes and creates the church. Mission is the praxis of God through the power and presence of the Spirit of Christ. As a result of this mission, the church comes into being as the sign of the kingdom of God in the world. The ongoing ministry of Christ through the power and presence of the Spirit of Christ constitutes the praxis of God's mission to the world through the church and its ministry. Practical theology is a task belonging to the mission of the church and a function of those who are involved in that mission. The nature of the church is determined in its existence as the mission of God to the world. For the church to exist as an end in itself, without a missionary praxis, is to sever its connection with the praxis of God's mission to the world."[4] Browning further argues that practical theology is "where ministers and lay persons who think about the practical life of the church really function." In what has become a classic in the field of practical theology, Don Browning offers a compelling and critical model that is developed from what he calls practical reason. The concept of practical reason, for Browning, places the theological task at the center of the social context, where the theologian stands with and alongside the church mediating the gospel of Christ from the center. "The mediation begins with action-reflection prompted by critical incidents that ask how the gospel of Christ answers the questions, 'What then shall we do? How then should we live?' Practical theology thus moves out from this center toward an 'outer envelope' that includes interpretive

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[4] Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 55.

paradigms, experimental probes, historical consciousness and communities of memory. At the center lies the 'inner core,' where experience raises the questions, 'What then shall we do?' and, 'How then should we live?' For Browning, practical theology must always be in touch with this 'inner core' of human experience. Any theology that cannot respond to (these) questions" operates only within the confines of the outer envelope. At the same time, it is precisely when practical theology engages the outer envelope in its action-reflection process that it becomes a living and vital theology of the church and its mission in the world."[5]

Browning presents five levels at which transformation can take place through strategic practical theology: (1) Visional: a new or amended understanding of a person or community; (2) Obligation: a new integration of old traditions and practices' (3) Tendency-need: a more explicit way to allow people to deal with their needs in a conscious and intentional way; (4) Environmental-social: a transformation of the community or the environment to more intentionally reflect theological convictions, (5) Rules and roles: concrete patterns of living are changed."[6] According to this writer's experiences if the field of corrections, ex-offenders are among the most misunderstood, misjudged, and stigmatized groups of people in society.

The first level of Browning's Practical Theology model calls for a new or amended understanding of a person or community. One of the objectives of this Doctor of Ministry project is to aid churches in gaining a new level of understanding of the plight of ex-offenders and to help them overcome the fear inducing notions and presumptions that often accompany thought about ex-offenders. As churches grow in their

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[5] Ibid. , 26, 27.

[6] Ibid. , 28.

understanding of the ex-offenders' need for forgiveness and restoration, the obligation (Brown's second level) calls them to reconsider old and traditional practices. This sense of obligation also moves the church to another level of consciousness that creates an environment in the covenant community (Brown's fourth level) that causes them to minister in accordance with their theological understanding. The final result of Brown's model is new roles in and for the church that ultimately revels itself in changed lives.

As Practical Theology concerns itself with the condition of existence as found in the context of ministry, we must be cautious of the tendency to be what this writer will call here "situation centered." That is to say the church does not receive its mission from the situation in which it ministers. Anderson offers helpful insight when he maintains that "theological reflection that begins in the context and crisis of ministry seeks to read the texts of scripture in light of the text of lives. This is why the hermeneutic of practical theology is a theological hermeneutic and not a spiritual hermeneutic."[7] A spiritual hermeneutic is too general, while a theological hermeneutic is based on an understanding of scripture couched within a certain theological framework. It is an outgrowth of a clearly understood system of beliefs about whit it means to be Christian. James Fowler "makes the point that ecclesial praxis is located between the normative texts and practice of Scripture and tradition on the one hand, and on the ongoing experience of the church's mission to the world on the other hand." Thus, "what the church does is informed by its understanding of what God is doing through its life and mission."[8]

[7] Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis,* 25.

[8] Ibid., 33.

Ex-offender Ministry as a Practical Theology of Forgiveness

John Perkins suggests that, "Practical theology, emerging out of life in a faith community, is a doxological mode of reflection that, by placing itself within the context of the church's service to God, attempts to facilitate the goal of a faithful life in the present on behalf of God's future. As such, practical theology is composed of six dimensions. Although each is distinguishable, none is separate from the others. Indeed, they are necessarily integrated, for, properly understood, each is simply one doorway into and expression of a single whole. These six interrelated dimensions are the liturgical, the moral, the spiritual, the pastoral, the ecclesial and the catechetical." He further suggests that, "The moral dimension (life as seeking justice and peace) focuses on life in a witnessing community. The moral includes both the people's character--their perceptions, dispositions, intentions, attitudes and values--and their conscience--the processes by which they, as believers in Jesus Christ and members of his church, discern the will of God and, guided by the community's ethical norms and principles, decide faithful action within particular moral situations."[9] Ministry to ex-offenders strikes at the heart of Perkins' moral dimension of practical theology. One of the greatest needs of ex-offenders is forgiveness and reconciliation. As a result of their criminal conduct, lawlessness, and incarceration, many of them carry the weight of guilt and shame. Andrew Sung Park believes that "guilt arises when one commits sin or does not do right. Guilt implies internalization of the moral values of society. Thus, a guilty person experiences the emotional consequence of culpability regardless of whether others are present or aware of

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[9] John H. Perkins, "Practical Theology: What will it Become." *Christian Century*, February 1-8, 1984, p.116, (article on-line) available from http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1372; Internet; accessed 24 August 2006.

his or her transgressions."[10] In his descriptions of the different kinds of shame, Park describes the shame of failure as "a response to our failure to live up to our self-expectations or the expectations of people whom we care about and respect. This type of failure shame burdens us with the uncertainty that we are able to achieve a task."[11] As a chaplain in corrections, this writer has observed and heard the testimonies of offenders expressing this very emotion and feeling. It is the peace of forgiveness and reconciliation they seek that can only be found in the community of faith that bears witness to the love and forgiveness of God. David Augsburger points out that, "Forgiveness is the 'remedy against the irreversibility and unpredictability of human actions,'. . . and it is an act that can correct previous actions or release persons from the consequence of those actions."[12] In their work *Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Moral Courage*, Robert Browning and Roy Reed wrote "Healthy guilt and shame can bring us to a place where we can repent of our self-serving actions that caused the hurt in the first place, can open the door to our willingness to ask for forgiveness from God and from those hurt, and finally forgive ourselves and to act out our own renewed relationship of trust, justice, and care."[13]

The church should be that place where healthy guilt and shame can be processed and ministered to and where offenders can recognize and be delivered from unhealthy guilt and shame. When this occurs offenders can hopefully move from guilt and shame to repentance and renewal.

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[10] Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 35.

[11] Ibid., 41.

[12] David Augsburger, *Helping People Forgive* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 9.

[13] Robert Browning and Roy Reed, *Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Moral Courage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 58.

As Kierkegaard and Niebuhr both recognize, remorse and despair are gifts that accompany our spiritual nature and are the result of our search for ultimate meaning, the result of our standing before God in freedom and finitude. Niebuhr sums it up for us when he states that all experiences of an uneasy conscience, of remorse and of repentance are therefore religious experiences, thought they are not always explicitly or consciously religious. Experiences of repentance, in distinction to remorse, presuppose some knowledge of God. . . . For without the knowledge of divine love remorse cannot be transmuted into repentance.[14]

Clark Hyde, in his book *To Declare God's Forgiveness* quotes Robert Browning where Browning says that "the task of the church is to construct an ethical world, a world in which forgiveness and renewal simultaneously are possibilities."[15] Ex-offenders often return to the community spiritually broken and emotionally fragmented, and are in need of a place of moral and spiritual "reconstruction." This creates within them a capacity to love and trust God as well as themselves again. Here is vitally important that the church clearly understands its role. "The church's role is seen not in 'laying down the law' but in forming a responsible people."[16]

Anderson solidifies this argument when he states that, "The context of forgiveness is thus not a courtroom but a social structure of human relations, such as friendship, marriage and being neighbors. In the core social relationships that bind persons to one another, the culture of the kingdom of God constitutes a significant reversal of human values rooted in self-preservation and self-justification. To express

[14] Ibid., 58.

[15] Clark Hyde, *To Declare God's Forgiveness: Toward a Pastoral Theology of Reconciliation* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse Barlow, 1984), 106.

[16] Ibid., 107.

forgiveness is contrary to the instincts of retaliation and vengeance."[17] It is this theological basis that enables the church to discard the political baggage that is often associated with ex-offender programs.

Although there are many legitimate arguments surrounding the concepts of retributive justice versus restorative justice, the church must remember and be true to its authentic purpose in the world. Monica Hellwig states it cogently, "The general task of the church is to pray with the penitent; to listen with deep compassion on behalf of God and the community; to discern the spiritual state of the penitent; to convey the forgiveness of God; and to help express the exigence of God's call to conversion."[18]

The Necessity of Forgiveness and Reconciliation

One of the most challenging, yet necessary factors in ex-offender's successful reentry, especially as it relates to the role of the church, is the matter of forgiveness. It is oftentimes the greatest need of the returning offender, and the greatest barrier in the community. Crime causes pain, and for every crime committed there is a victim. Whether the crimes are against nature, the community, or an individual, crime causes an adverse effect. It is the adverse effects of crime and criminal conduct that must be reckoned with in the spiritual process of reentry and the most important and pivotal element is the process of forgiveness. According to Dr. Andrew Park, "Christianity is a movement of forgiveness." He adds that, "according to the New Testament scholar William Klassen, forgiveness is a pervasive motif in the Bible. In the Hebrew Bible, forgiveness is chiefly

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[17] Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis*, 296.

[18] Hyde, *To Declare God's Forgiveness: Toward a Pastoral Theology of Reconciliation*, 109.

an action of God toward Israel who breaches the covenant relationship. However, the New Testament depicts Jesus Christ as the one who brings God's grace to forgive sins down to earth and leaves there in the church, the forgiving community."[19] Therefore, the church becomes the physical, visible, and tangible mediator of God's grace. The church is not the mediator in the same sense that Christ mediates the relationship between a Holy God and sinful humanity, but mediator in the sense that God uses the church as a human expression of his love. Park states that the "New Testament teaches the offended to forgive the offender, based on God's unconditional forgiveness toward him or her. The noteworthy point is that human forgiveness is closely related to divine forgiveness. While the Hebrew Bible emphasizes divine forgiveness, the New Testament focuses on human forgiveness, built on divine forgiveness-the unlimited forgivingness that the offended can offer the offender because of God's unconditional forgivingness."[20] A clear and practical understanding of forgiveness is important to note at this point. Browning and Reed are helpful in their reflections on the study of Robert Enright's concerning forgiveness. "Enright believed that forgiveness is the overcoming of negative affect and judgment towards the offenders, not by denying ourselves the right to such affect and judgment, but by endeavoring to see view the offender with compassion, benevolence, and love while recognizing that he or she has abandoned the right to them."[21] Enright further comments that "Forgiveness and reconciliation are different realities. Forgiveness involves one person. Reconciliation involves two or more persons. To forgive another does not mean

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[19] Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded*, 81.

[20] Ibid., 83.

[21] Browning and Reed, *Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Moral Courage*, 63.

that the other is ready for reconciliation and wants it. Forgiveness does remove the interior barriers in the offended one, making possible reconciliation."[22] Thus, the church maintains a posture of forgiveness, making reconciliation an imminent reality for the offender who is spiritually and emotionally available for transformation. The late Dr. Myles J. Jones of Virginia Union University School of Theology often said, "When the pupil is ready, the teacher will appear." One might say, when the offender is ready, the forgiver will appear.

In distinguishing between the person offering the forgiveness and the recipient of forgiveness, Dr. Park coined the phrase "forgiven-ness" for what the offender has received. He then shares Donald Shriver's elements of forgiveness. "Forgiveness begins with a remembering and a moral judgment of wrong, injustice, and injury. Both parties to an offence must agree about the wrongs committed. Second, forgiveness demands the renunciation of vengeance, although it does not require the abandonment of justice. Third, forgiveness makes necessary an empathy with the enemy's humanity. It acknowledges that an enemy is a human being like us. Finally, a genuine forgiveness seeks "the renewal of a human relationship."[23] This writer finds this model applicable to the role and function of the church in ex-offender ministry. The final element in this process should be the driving motivation that starts and maintains this process of forgiveness. It is the humanity in the offender that the spirit which operates in the church desires to minister to. "In his classic book *I and Thou*, the Jewish Scholar, Martin Buber,

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[22] Ibid., 64.

[23] Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded*, 99.

said that the mysterious truth in all human relations is that when we treat others as Thous, as sacred beings of unique and infinite value, we become Thous ourselves."[24]

The ultimate goal of forgiveness is reconciliation. This is the primary difference between retributive justice and restorative justice. Retributive justice focuses on retribution for a crime. In this justice, punishment centers on deterrence. Restorative justice is concerned for both the victim and the perpetrator and highlights the restoration of broken relationships. Consequently, restorative justice moves us in the direction of reconciliation. Browning and Reed are helpful here in explaining the complexities of reconciliation. They suggested that "the process of reconciliation has been more difficult than forgiveness because two or more persons are always involved with their own unique perceptions of the past, their specific feelings of hurt, anger, guilt, fear, shame, and a lack of trust."[25] While it only takes one individual to forgive, reconciliation requires the mutual effort and desire of all that are involved. Throughout this chapter this writer has sought to emphasize the importance of understanding reconciliation as an on-going process and not a single event. Hyde helps us to better understand this fact is his assertion that "preparing people for reconciliation [sic] has both long-range and immediate aspects and should be aimed both at the community and the individual. Strategically, the long-range and communal preparation is more important and more fruitful. Without it, work with individuals is likely to be largely remedial and risks being superficial.

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[24] Browning and Reed, *Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Moral Courage*, 50.

[25] Ibid. , 69.

Biblical Foundations

Old Testament Foundation
Isaiah 55:1-6

In the scripture passage referenced above, this writer finds an Old Testament motif for ex-offender ministry. This prophetic promise of Isaiah is heralded to a people that had offended their God, and suffered the punishment of exile (incarceration), and are now given a divine invitation to return to their God and their homeland for forgiveness and restoration. This section explores the inherent qualities of forgiveness and restoration in selected segments of this text that has been implicit in the theological portion of this writing.

As this writer has established, the greatest need of ex-offenders is their need for forgiveness and restoration. At the root of the criminal conduct of offenders is spirit of alienation from their community and from their God. Their plight and condition is much like the recipients of the prophetic utterance of the prophet Isaiah 55. Like the people of Israel and Judah, ex-offenders have forsaken the God of righteousness and followed their sinful thoughts and desires; they are now suffering the consequences of their choices and waywardness. However, the church, like the prophet Isaiah, has a message of hope for a people who feel helpless and hopeless; this message comes at a critical and pivotal time in their personal and social history. For the ex-offender it is pivotal because upon release from incarceration they are faced with many decisions regarding direction in their lives. They are oftentimes searching for acceptance and love; and messages they receive will affect the choices they make. Although many offenders receive the Gospel while they are

incarcerated, there are countless others who have not received or believed the message of forgiveness prior to release. It is here that the message of the prophet is befitting.

In Isaiah 55:1 the prophet declares "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1 KJV). The addressees of the invitation are as Jan Koole explains "in exile are far from Zion in unsatisfactory conditions; they are in want, not in the least religiously. This want is not just an objective fact, but a personal experience. The text is talking about people who do not resign themselves to the situation but are tormented by their desire from Zion and for fellowship with Yahweh, and who cannot supply their own needs. Hence the address is personally directed to those who thirst. But it also includes all thirsty ones in general."[26] Correspondingly, jail and prison can be likened to a kind of exile; a place where men and women lose their sense of purpose and the wherewithal to reconnect to the God of love and power. It is in the midst of rejection that the comforting words of the prophet arrive with a resounding *"come."* J. AlecMotyer in his commentary *The Prophecy of Isaiah* speaks to the significance the "come:"

> Each come highlights a distinct aspect of what is offered. (i) *Come to the waters* highlights the existence of needs and the adequacy of provision of water for the thirsty. (ii) *You who have no money* highlights he poverty of the needy one. This is a purchase which is somehow free to the purchaser. Poverty is no barrier, indeed the person with no money is a welcome customer who will eat according to need. (iii) *Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost* highlights the richness and as well as the freeness of the commodity. Yet alongside this emphasis on freeness, the verb buy is repeated. There is a purchase and a price, though not

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[26] Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah III: Historical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Leuven, Belgium: Peters, 2002), 405.

theirs to pay. They bring their poverty to a purchase already completed.[27]

While there is much debate about the use of public funding to provide special programs for the transitioning of ex-offenders, the word of God resounds with a prolific invitation to those who transgressions have left them destitute. John Oswalt points out that,

> Despite the prominence of exhortation in the previous chapters of Isaiah the tone here is one of hope and encouragement. In terms of the structure and thought of the first part of Isaiah, something has happened that has completely changed the picture. If they will, God's people can see a face of God that is welcoming and approving. They can receive a certain word from God that does not have to do with the inescapability of destruction, but with the assurance of a bright future. What has happened to account for this shift in tone? One thing only: the announcement of the work of the Servant. Because of what he has done, God's face toward his people is not stormy but sunny. The 'arm of the Lord' has been revealed against what has separated them from God: their un-atoned sin. The only thing they must do is accept the sin offering that the Servant has made (in prospect) and receive the mercy of God that the offering entails.[28]

The prophet Isaiah continues with the question "Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isaiah 55:2 KJV). This question is designed for reflection and self-examination. It is for individuals who have sought after "fools' gold" and remain empty and unfulfilled. J. Ridderbos suggests that, "to make the invitation more urgent, the prophet points to the poverty of life outside the salvation offered by the Lord. Such a life is a

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[27] J. A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary,* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993), 456.

[28] John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 228.

matter of spending money for "no bread" and of expending labor for what does not satisfy. The expression "no bread" has to refer to a substance that passes for bread but is not in fact bread. In keeping with the preceding verse this is to be understood figuratively; so it refers to an illusion, a pseudo-satisfaction that contrasts with the true pleasures the Lord offers."[29] Jan L. Koole explains that, "scholars often find a reproach here that the people addressed devote themselves to earthly things and are not concerned with spiritual matters. This secularization is not revealed in a lack of religiosity but in an assimilation to the Babylonian religion."[30]

The apostle James warns in forthright terms those who set their affections on materialism, "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted, your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted" (Jas. 5:1-3 KJV).

One of the challenging aspects of the exilic community was the influence of Babylonian culture and religion, and one of the challenging aspects of incarceration in the modern penal system is the influence of the dominant culture of jails and penitentiaries. Consequently, men and women are faced with the quandary of choosing the God who satisfies or the gods that leave them empty and wanting. Oswalt adds that, "this is not Israelite food as opposed to Babylonian food, but the spiritual vitality that springs from obedience to God as opposed to the blandishments of a world built on rebellion against him."[31] Jesus repeats the invitation offered by his Father through Isaiah, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink" (St. John 7:37 KJV). He spoke of himself as "the

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[29] J. Ridderbos, *Bible Students Commentary: Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1950), 499.

[30] Koole, *Isaiah III: Historical Commentary on the Old Testament*, 408.

[31] Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 229.

living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread he will live for ever and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (St. John 6:51 KJV). The commodity in shortest supply among the exiles was hope. Everything that belonged to their past had been destroyed. Their land had been ravaged. The temple in Jerusalem, the center of their worship, lay in ruins. There was no comfort to be found in their present circumstances. They were overwhelmed by their sense of loss, taunted by their captors, like fish out of water in an alien culture. Life was bleak and the future didn't bear thinking about. It was into this darkness that a word of promise came, "Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you" (Isaiah 55:3 KJV). *Incline your ear,* as you do to that which you find yourselves concerned in and pleased with; bow the ear, and let the proud heart stoop to the humbling methods of the gospel; bend the ear this way, that you may hear with attention and remark; hear, *and come unto me;* not only come and eat with me, but comply with me, come up to my terms." [32] The people of Judah had, for the most part rejected, God but he still loved them, and here he was offering them a fresh start. God's promises to King David and his royal successors after him are now being made freely available to all the people of Israel. This is the message of the church to ex-offenders, that through the greater son of David the living bread has been made available.

Although the invitation has been extended to those who are spiritually destitute, there is a prerequisite stated that forgiveness is contingent upon. The prophet Isaiah now says, "Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the

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[32] Matthew Henry. "Complete Commentary on Isaiah 55". "Matthew Henry Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible." Available from http://www.studylight.org/com/mhc-com/view.cgi?book=isa&chapter=055. 1706; Internet; accessed 24 August 2006.

wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:6-7). Here Alect Motyer explains that "seek is used not in the sense of looking for what is lost but of coming with commitment to one known to be there. While he may be found…while he is near implies urgency, a limited time of opportunity. We could translate while he may be found as 'while he permits himself to be found, indicating a divinely determined day of grace and salvation. Near is part of the vocabulary of next-of-kinship. In Leviticus 25:25 it is associated with the redeemer, and the linguistically sensitive Isaiah must have intended this. Thus, there is a fixed period when the Lord may be found as next-of-kin."[33] The prophet Isaiah impresses a sense of urgency on God's people. God can be found now. Seek Him now. It isn't that God is hidden, and can only be found now. It is that He can only be found when our hearts are inclined to look for Him, and that inclination itself is a gift from God. Koole suggests that, "to go to God is not something that is natural to do. It implies a deliberate movement, a victory over indecision, and an awareness of what can be expected of God. The call to 'seek' Yahweh also implies the demand for repentance. Israel cannot expect deliverance from the gods."[34] This is a timely message for men and women who are often at spiritual crossroads and are seeking deliverance from their lifestyles. Ridderbos adds that "the expression signifies here the movement of the heart, with all its affections and expressions, toward the Lord to enjoy his fellowship, to gain his help, and to share his salvation; and on the other, to be devoted to him as God, to honor and serve him and to

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[33] J. A. Motyer , *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary,* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993), 457.

[34] Koole, *Isaiah III: Historical Commentary on the Old Testament,* 428.

trust him."[35] It is an opportunity to learn to trust again and to overcome the cynicism of the stigma they face. Isaiah tells his people this is not information that they should seek from God, but his presence and his character, gifts that he longs to give them. Oswalt explains that "it is plain that He is more than ready to be found. He wants to comfort the despairing, forgive the sinner, and deliver the bound. What remains to be done for the blessings to be experienced? Only one thing: we must seek Him and call on him."[36]

Seeking the Lord is only one part of the equation. The prophet Isaiah now shares with the people what must follow seeking the Lord. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7 KJV). AlecMotyer speaks to this issue clearly when he says, "Both sides of repentance (forsaking and returning) are here, just as both sides of the Lord's response (mercy/compassion) are here."[37] The mercy of the Lord works in and through our repentance, which simply means a change of heart and mind. It is a turning away from ungodliness and a turning to the God of our salvation. Isaiah states that the wicked must forsake their way.

> Wicked (*rasa*) is a word with as broad a meaning in Hebrew as it is English, saving that in Hebrew it is also used for "guilty before the law." Evil man is used of those who are trouble-makers towards other people. Way and thoughts refer to the life-style and the philosophy of life behind it. And he will have mercy denotes the purpose at which the return aims; for he will abundantly pardon provides the balancing reassurance that repentance is sure to meet.

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[35] Ridderbos, *Bible Students Commentary: Isaiah*, 502.

[36] Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 230.

[37] Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 457.

Pardon denotes the idea of restoration to divine fellowship by the removal of the barrier sin has erected.[38]

Oswalt presses this point. He states, "When the wicked one and the man of iniquity turn to the Lord, the thing that they will find is not righteous anger and retributive justice. Instead they will find compassion and multiplied pardon. Unless God can pardon this rebellion without making mockery of his entire system of justice, mere delivery from Babylon will accomplish nothing. That God is ready with compassion and abundant pardon in his hands says that a way has been found and that those who will turn around from their rebellion, confess their sin, and accept the sin offering of the Servant may have something infinitely better than restoration to Judah: restoration to God."[39] Oswalt notes here the importance of the word return in this passage. The concern of ex-offenders is can they return? To whom can they return? And how should they return? This passage provides a comforting answer to all of these questions, and the church must assume the prophet role of Isaiah in sharing this word with those who are contemplating return. There must be an invitation to return to the Lord, or the men and women have no choice except to return to their previous lifestyles and behaviors.

New Testament Foundation

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by
Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation;
To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself,
not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto
us the word of reconciliation (1 Cor. 5:18-19 KJV).

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[38] Ibid., 457.

[39] Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah,* 231.

From the New Testament perspective the this ministry model finds biblical relevance and insight in the reconciling work of God in Christ Jesus, and the responsibility given to the body of Christ to be the agents of reconciliation. "Theologian Karl Barth has been quoted often concerning how to proclaim the gospel of good news to our world. He asserted that we should take the bible in one hand and the local newspaper in the other in order to relate the story of God's love, forgiveness, and reconciliation to the specific life issues of people."[40] It is the aim of the writer to follows Barth's suggestion in the examination of this text, continuing the thematic address of its relationship to the issue of ex-offender reintegration. As the writer has explained in the theological foundation of this research, the great need of all men is forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration. This need is considered, provided for and proclaimed in the life of Jesus the Christ. J.A. Gunstone in his book, *The Liturgy of Penance* says "the Gospel of the kingdom which Christ summoned men to believe in is the good news that God, in his forgiving love, is among men, healing them of the sickness of their sin by the power that is solely his, Jesus is the bringer of forgiveness."[41] Clark Hyde, speaking in reference to that assertion adds that "the breaking in of the kingdom demanded a radical decision, and the early Christian community required that it be made in faith accompanied by moral conversion. This choice was made by the believer in baptism, in which the faithful were incorporated into the Body of Christ, in which they became one and shared in His victory over sin and death."[42] It was in the spirit of that faith that the Apostle Paul wrote, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things

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[40] Browning and Reed, *Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Moral Courage*, 2.

[41] J.A.T. Gunstone, *The Liturgy of Penance* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse Barlow, 1966), 10.

[42] Hyde, *To Declare God's Forgiveness: Toward a Pastoral Theology of Reconciliation*, 7.

are passed away; behold, things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17 KJV). In Christ, a new spiritual life if given to the convert, his precious sins are cancelled, he is endowed with the Holy Spirit, and a new and glorious life begins. This is the theme that claims the heart of Paul as he explains to the Corinthians the implications of this radically new life in Christ. The verses that follow, specifically 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, further explains how this new life came to be and what the results must be. Paul declares that, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world in himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). "In verses 18 and 19 Paul describes God's reconciling activity and his commissioning of workers to carry forward that activity. Rather than just noting that he has a commission Paul exercises it in the form of an imperative and exhortation. The closing note of verse 19, that God "has placed in us the message of reconciliation," leads directly into the imperative which climaxes in verse 20. Recognition of this structure has exegetical consequences. It tells us that Paul's thinking leaps from God's reconciling activity in Christ to his commissioning of workers, probably with little pause to separate the two, perhaps with no pause at all. If this is a correct insight, Hyde understands Paul different from other commentators: most of them have introduced a sharp separation, subordinating the human, ongoing work to Christ's dramatic work in reconciliation and treating the human part chiefly as an instrumentality, or as "follow-up."

Calvin construed the "ministry of reconciliation" in terms of the worthiness of the pastoral office. That misses the point, exegetically speaking, because it treats the ministry on grounds of status, whereas Paul's preeminent concern is with his role, as 2 Corinthians 5:20 and 2 Corinthians 6:1 makes plain. In 2 Corinthians 5:19 Paul begins

with the conjunction (Greek, *hos hoti*; RSV; "that is"), which suggests an expansion intended to clarify his statement in 2 Corinthians 5:18."[43] This exegesis by Richard T. Mead provides a powerful intersection between the role of the church and the needs of ex-offenders. For in Meade's concluding comments on this passage he reflects on the shifting of emphasis that has taken place throughout the centuries with regards to this pericope. He informs us that "a large family of exegetes from Athanasius to Augustine, has stressed the terms God, Christ, sin, reconciliation, and righteousness." He further comments that,

> Protestant Reformation Theology encouraged a rededication to this "family heritage," and so has neo-Orthodox Protestantism done in our era-though it added "reconciling the world" to the stressed terms. It is no wonder if we almost instinctively treat some issues as central; for fifteen centuries the passage has been understood to describe God's reconciling work, about which the church preaches to men. That conception corresponds, broadly, to the role accepted by Western Christian churches during A.D. 400-1900. The faith of the church was regarded as a deposit of doctrines expressing historical, objective acts of God. The doctrines were stated in a creed. The business of the church toward men was to bring them into a believing connection with the doctrines.[44]

Meade argues that in our time, a new role of the church is emerging which emphasizes compassion, and the church operating in the role of the servants that helps the church provide healing. Now the emphasis of the text is placed on "the ministry of reconciliation."

In his work *Interpreting 2 Corinthians: An exercise in Hermeneutics,* Jack Lewis suggested that the theological implications of this passage are:

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[43] Jack P. Lewis, ed., *Interpreting 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; An Exercise in Hermeneutics* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1989), 152.

[44] Ibid., 161.

1. The church is primarily engaged in the proclamation of the message of reconciliation. The message is an announcement that (a) God through Jesus Christ forgives the past and makes possible a new existence, (b) this new existence is life drawn from the resources of God and is a call to righteousness, justice, and a Spirit-directed life.

2. The church's stance is one of viewing no man in terms of secular criteria, which lead to separateness.

3. The church recognizes its essential unity in the operation of God's saving purpose in Jesus Christ. There is neither bond nor free, Caucasian nor non-Caucasian, male nor female.[45]

One of the primary marks of the church is the church's identification with the Suffering Servant. The church's obligation is to assume the burden of identification with the death of Christ. This means that the church must ever be self-critical, subjecting itself to the scrutiny of God. The church must be willing to endure rejection by that part of the *kosmos* which refuses to accept the indictment of its misdirected existence through diaconate of reconciliation. The church cannot, without denial of its own *raison d'etre,* tailor its message to conform to preferred *kosmos* thinking; as it struggles with the problem of effecting community."[46] The theological lens through which Lewis is views this text, and the ecclesiological implications that he infers formulates for the church the ideal theology for ministering to ex-offenders. The church cannot be separated from its message, and the message of the church acknowledges the sinful nature of all humankind, and the saving potential for all in Christ Jesus. Thus, the nature of the individual's sin, crime, or offence does not affect the message or spirit of reconciliation that we have been given. W. Hulitt Gloer argues that "Paul understood reconciliation to have not only

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[45] Lewis, ed., *Interpreting 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; An Exercise in Hermeneutics,* 154.

[46] Ibid., 100.

vertical (humanity to God) but also horizontal (human being to human being)

implications. He says "it is clear that Paul is calling for a "fleshing out" of reconciliation

in his relationship to the alienated Corinthians. This is also implied in verse 16, where

Paul discusses the new way of knowing others that has been inaugurated in the new

creation."[47] For Paul, Christians were to give expression to the authenticity of the

message of reconciliation in their daily lives. Gloer states further that:

> There is a sense in which reconciliation is for Paul a process which
> is completed in three stages. There is, first of all the reconciling act
> of God in Christ Jesus. This may be understood as the objective
> aspect of reconciliation, which is now completed. Second, there is
> the necessity for the proclamation of this reconciliation. This task
> has been entrusted to those who have themselves received
> reconciliation. Finally, there is the acceptance of this message,
> when one accepts buy faith God's act of reconciliation in Christ
> and is introduced into the realm of reconciliation, which places a
> continual claim upon the reconciled to live as a new person.[48]

Following the thought flow of this paradigm it should be the role and the goal of the

church to help deliver individuals from the cycle of recidivism and introduce them into

the cycle of reconciliation; being reconciled, and becoming the agents of reconciliation.

Frank Stagg is also helpful in this thought when he states that "The mark of the

one thus transformed is that he/she does live unto himself/herself but unto God." [49] As

Ralph Martin stated "Reconciliation is more than a code-word for God's work of

restoring men and women to himself. It marks the way of life to which those people are

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[47] W. Hulitt Gloer, *An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Understanding of New Creation and Reconciliation* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1996), 202.

[48] Ibid., 203.

[49] Lewis, *Interpreting 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; An Exercise in Hermeneutics*, 164.

summoned by the fact that they are reconciled and share in God's continuing ministry of reconciliation."[50]

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[50] Gloer, *An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Understanding of New Creation and Reconciliation*, 202.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The title of this ministry model is "Equipping the Laity to Minister to Ex-Offenders." The context selected for this project proposal was the Gethsemane Community Fellowship Baptist Church located in Norfolk, Virginia, where the writer serves as pastor. The participants consisted of ten laypersons from various social, economic and educational backgrounds.

The hypothesis of this ministry model suggests that the local church is ineffective in providing ministry and services to ex-offenders because of the lack of understanding relating to the challenges, needs and complex issues of ex-offender reentry. Additionally, the lack of interest and involvement in the Christian community is largely due to this fact. The objective is to develop a model curriculum designed to educate and equip the laity to provide holistic ministry to men and women returning home from jail or prison. The premise is that by receiving this training laypersons will have an understanding of the growing problem of ex-offender re-entry, be more sensitive to the needs of ex-offenders, overcome stereotypes commonly associated with ex-offenders, and understand the church's role in this area of social ministry. Furthermore, this model could be used to train and educate the laity of other churches and para-church ministries interested in offering ministry to ex-offenders. The model consisted of seven modules addressing the

following areas of concern: 1.) Understanding the Needs of Ex-Offenders 2.) Assessment and Screening 3.) Ministering to the Spiritual Needs of Ex-Offenders 4.) Resource Identification and Collaborative Partnerships 5.) Mentoring Ex-Offenders 6.) Empowering Ex-Offenders and 7.) Understanding Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Challenges.

In addition to providing the training for the "focus group", the writer also delivered a three-part series of sermons to the congregation on the parable of the Prodigal Son recorded in the 15th chapter of the Gospel of Luke. The sermons were designed to deal with the dynamics of offence, return, reconciliation, and forgiveness.

Moreover, this writer had a discussion group with the associate ministers of the GCFBC that centered around two questions. The first question was, "Why is there a lack of concern or involvement of churches in the are of reentry?" And secondly, "What is the unique role and ability of the church in providing assistance to ex-offenders?"

The Planning Process

During the planning stage, this writer researched and utilized a combination of resources ranging from books specifically designed for providing services to ex-offenders to sociology text books and the writer's own experience as a Rehabilitation Counselor.

Furthermore, this writer identified persons from a cross-section of the congregation to serve as the test group for the project and solicited their participation. An interest meeting was held to explain the purpose and process of the training and to gain commitment from the individuals selected. A pretest questionnaire was given to the participants to determine their level of understanding and their attitudes related to ex-

offender reentry and the role of the church in this area of ministry. The pretest questionnaire is located in Appendix B. Then the classes were scheduled to provide 90-minute sessions for each of the modules listed in the curriculum.

Research Design, Measurement, and Instrumentation

The writer referred to the John W. Creswell's book *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* in order to determine the type of research design that would be more effective for this project model. According to Creswell "the focus of qualitative research is on participants perceptions and experiences, and they way they make sense of their lives"[1] After reviewing the variety of methodologies the writer determined that the qualitative methodology was the ideal approach to this model of research. The writer was more concerned about uncovering knowledge about how people think and feel about ex-offenders and how the church should respond to their transitional needs. Additionally, the writer had preconceived notions about the thoughts and attitudes of parishioners and sought to approach this experiment utilizing deductive reasoning to determine of his presumptions were factual. A pretest/posttest instrument was selected in order to determine the attitudes and knowledge of the participants prior to the training intervention, and to determine the effectiveness of the after the training was complete.

The writer's understanding of this approach to research was enhanced by the insight received from Russel K. Schutt in his text *Investigating The Social World: The Process and Practice of Research* in which he explains endogenous change. He states that:

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[1] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 199.

Endogenous change occurs when natural developments in the subjects, independent of the experimental treatment itself, account for some or all of the observed change between pretest and posttest. Endogenous change includes these three specific threats to you validity:

- *Testing*. Taking the pretest can in itself influence posttest scores. Subjects may learn something or be sensitized to an issue by the pretest and as a result, respond differently the next time they are asked the same questions, on the posttest.

- *Maturation*. Changes in outcome scores during experiments that involve a lengthy treatment period may be due to maturation. Subjects may age, gain experience, or grow in knowledge all as a part of natural maturational experience and thus respond differently on the posttest than on the pretest.

- *Regression*. Subjects who are chosen for a study because they received very low scores on a test may show improvement in the posttest, on average, simply because some of the low scorers were having a bad day.[2]

In consideration of that insight the writer informed the focus group to answer the questions alone and not to discuss the project with others, so that "true" measurement of knowledge and attitudes before and after could be assessed.

Subsequently, this writer developed the seven-part curriculum that would serve as the training intervention model. Several resources were helpful at this critical stage in the process. In his book, *Designing and Assessing Courses and Curricula: A Practical Guide,* Robert Diamond comments that "designing a strong course of curriculum is always difficult, time consuming and challenging. It requires thinking about what your students will learn, and finally about how you as their teacher can facilitate the process. This demanding task forces you to face the issues that you may have avoided in the past, to test assumptions with which you are comfortable, and to investigate areas of research

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[2] Russel K. Schutt, *Investigating The Social World: The Process and Practice of Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press), 213.

that are unfamiliar to you."[3] Equally as helpful was the knowledge gleaned from Diane

Balestri's *Learning to Design, Designing to Learn: Using Technology to Transfer the*

Curriculum where she suggests "designing curriculum is:

- *Constructive*, that is, aimed at producing a material product that meets some set or more or less defined specifications.

- *Creative*, that is, requiring a novel response to an open-ended problem or situation.

- *Sustained, Sequential, and Recursive*, including a healthy proportion of discovery by trial and error.

- *Subject to analysis* from several important perspectives, including feasibility, aesthetics and economics.

This writer reflects more concerning this process in the Chapter 6. It was the

writer's objective to design a pre and posttest, and curriculum that would enable him to

conduct a valid comparative analysis pre and post training.   A copy of the curriculum is

included in Appendix D. A group of ten laypersons were selected from the congregation

to serve as the focus group. The writer selected individuals that he felt would be

interested and available to participate in this study. Upon their agreement and

commitment to participate, and completion of the pretest, the participants attended a

seven-week training course utilizing the designed curriculum. At the end of the training

period each participant completed a posttest to determine their grasp of the information

and the effectiveness of the training curriculum.

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[3] Robert Diamond, *Designing and Assessing Courses and Curricula: A Practical Guide* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.), 1.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The preparation phase of this project began in November 2005. The writer

scheduled a consultation meeting with the Executive Director of the Second Chances

Program, and a member of the writer's congregation. The Second Chances Program is a

program sponsored by the city of Norfolk, Virginia and a subsidiary of a community

action agency called the Southeastern Tidewater Opportunity Project (The STOP

Organization). The program offers counseling, support, housing, life-skills training,

employment preparation and placement to non-violent ex-offenders who are residents of

the city of Norfolk. The purpose of the meeting was to examine and discuss the wide

range of needs of the ex-offenders from both sides of the "bars." The collaboration would

draw upon the experiences of this writer with men and women who constantly return to

jail and prison because of the inability to reintegrate into society successfully and

overcome negative habits and destructive lifestyles. The collaboration would also draw

upon the experience and expertise of the director as a service provider in the field of ex-

offender reentry. Additionally, this writer sought the knowledge and insight of his wife,

Sharon Houston, a Social Worker who is familiar with the process of interviewing and

assessments in the Human Services field. These meetings and consultations provided

much needed insight to this writer as he understood the interdisciplinary approach that

this research would require. Furthermore, a variety of resources would be required and

utilized in the Field Experience to adequately address the various components of the curriculum.

Collection and Analysis of Data

To begin the experiment, the pretest was given to all participants and returned to the writer within seven days. The writer wanted to give the participants adequate time to complete the test without the stress of an imposed place and time. Secondly, the writer implemented the seven-week training curriculum. Upon the completion of the training the posttest was administered to the participants. The writer then performed a comparative analysis of the answers given to each of the participants' pre and posttest answers to determine if--and how much--their knowledge or attitudes concerning the needs, concerns and challenges of ex-offenders had changed. Additionally, the writer listened to the audiotapes of each training session to assess and evaluate the feedback and comments given by the participants during the training sessions.

Outcome

The research and training was an educating and enriching experience for the writer as he gained a deeper understanding through formal research of an area he had served in as a practitioner for nearly sixteen years. Most notable was the first session that addressed the emotional and psychological affects of incarceration upon offenders.

As the group processed the information through lecture and dialogue, one of the participants--whose father had spent many years in and out of jail--remarked emotionally they she wished she had been more aware of this information during the her father's life.

The writer was pleasantly surprised at the openness and interest of the group during each session. Throughout the sessions it became more obvious how little the average person knows and understands about the complex emotional, social, physical, and economic barriers that exist in the lives of ex-offenders. The participants were astonished by such facts as the educational level of the average offender, the overwhelming amount of fines and court costs that offenders are required to pay upon release from jail and prison, as well as the lack of family support and community resources that are available to ex-offenders. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Statistics in 1997, 26.5% of federal prison inmates and 39.7% of state inmates did not have a high school diploma or the equivalent. In addition, 12% of federal inmates and 14.2% of state inmates had only an 8th grade education or less.[1] There was also informative feedback and insight from group participants who are employed corrections counseling/education, substance abuse counseling, and probation and parole. The expertise of those group members provided valuable insight to the other group members as well as this writer.

During the seven weeks of training, some of the participants expressed a deeper level of concern and sensitivity for ex-offenders as well as a greater understanding of why so many men and women resort back to criminal behavior upon their release. Additionally, the group displayed an attitude of eagerness and openness to dialogue on the subject matter. The participation of one ex-offender provided experiential knowledge of issues facing the target group. The general consensus of the group was that the training was informative and enlightening, and that the church has a vital and valuable role to play in the process of reentry. The comparative analysis of the tests administered to the

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[1] U.S. Department of Justice Statistics, *Education and Correctional Populations*, 2003, prepared by Caroline Wolf Harlow; available from http://fastnennetwork.org; Internet; accessed 28 August 2006.

participants revealed that the training model did affect the thoughts, beliefs and understanding of the needs of ex-offenders and the role of the church in this reentry process.

During the seven weeks of training, the writer also preached the series of aforementioned sermons at GCFBC. The series was entitled "The Church's Return Policy" and consisted of messages titled "Risky Business," "Home, Now What?" and "What About Me?" The messages examined the return of the "Prodigal Son" and the family dynamics that were prevalent in the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. In the sermon titled "What About Me?" the writer juxtaposed the attitude and feelings expressed by the older brother with the feelings and attitudes of persons who do no sympathize with the plight of ex-offenders who have made poor choices and seek to return home to make amends. The purpose of the messages was to educate, inspire, and sensitize the congregation to the philosophies surrounding reentry from a biblical perspective. The outlines of the messages are included in Appendix E of this dissertation. The week following the presentation of the sermon "What About Me?" the writer had a discussion forum with the congregation in a weekly Bible study in order to receive feedback on how the messages impacted the parishioners. At the beginning of the discussion, the writer gave a brief overview of the outlines of each message and allowed a time from questions, answers and comments. A numbers of respondents shared painful and personal experiences of family members who had been incarcerated and the difficult they experienced in continuing to provide support to those who repeatedly demonstrated the same behavior and did not exemplify a genuine desire to change their lifestyle or behavior. Others shared their gratitude for the messages and the message of the love of

God for all who sin and make mistakes. Several individuals shared personally with the writer their desire for the messages to be shared abroad and throughout the Christian community.

The final part of the Field Experiment was a discussion group with the associate ministers of the GCFBC. As aforementioned, the discussion centered around two questions: "Why is there a lack of concern among churches in the area of ex-offender reentry?" and "What is the unique role of the church in providing assistance to ex-offenders?" The feedback and contributions of this group proved to be a watershed moment in the project. Regarding the question, "What is the unique role and ability of the church in ex-offender reentry?" The following responses were given.

- The church can provide a non-judgmental environment for ex-offenders.

- The church does not have the state and federal boundaries or restrictions that other agencies have.

- The church can provide positive alternative activities for ex-offenders, especially during evening hours when many of them are more likely to engage in former lifestyle behaviors.

- The church has a message of mercy for people who have come from an unmerciful environment.

- The church is a place of hope and peace.

- The church is a place of holistic healing.

- The church can be a safe environment where individuals don't have prove themselves in order to be accepted and can receive help to deal with their pain and guilt.

- The church has the ability to allow ex-offenders the opportunity to make spiritual connections and remove guilt, while recognizing that the church is filled with imperfect people who choose to seek perfection.

In response to the question, "Why is there seemingly a lack of concern among churches regarding ex-offender reentry?" the following thoughts were offered:

- Some are fearful of persons who have been incarcerated, and others find it difficult to offer forgiveness to those who have committed "heinous" crimes.

- Some churches are simply unaware of the issues surrounding reentry and are not exposed to the many challenges they face.

- Reentry is a relatively new problem facing the community. Additionally, not all churches feel a sense of "calling" to this particular area of ministry.

- Churches have tendency to try to protect the very things we have been called to give away.

The thoughts and feeling of this group further substantiated the hypothesis of the writer of this study. As a result of ignorance, fear, and sometimes unconcern, churches are incapable of providing affective ministry for ex-offenders. This study proved helpful to the writer and the GCFBC as deeply rooted feelings and thoughts were examined and discussed.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

Matriculating in this Doctor of Ministry program has proven to be a very rewarding experience for the writer. The writer found the academic environment of United Theological Seminary to be intellectually stimulating and spiritually refreshing. The combination of inspiring sermons, thought provoking lectures, and interesting peer group discussions made the intensive weeks gratifying.

The first phase of the process required the writer to revisit the landmarks of his own spiritual journey, analyze his present ministry context and find the unique intersection of journey, gift, opportunity, and passion. The journey and the analysis provided valuable insight that would give birth to this project. After the project was selected, the research began and the writer became more than and chaplain in the local jail and a pastor in the local church; he became a student and researcher of the complex social, spiritual, and political issues of ex-offender reentry.

Throughout the process, dialogue with mentors, peer group members, and professional associates helped the writer crystallize the concept of this project. The literature review compelled him to consider this phenomenon from many different vantage points. The writer considered the social, educational, and economic backgrounds of the offenders and the barriers to reentry. The writer also included the ideological and philosophical issues of prerelease rehabilitation; the political realities of special interest

groups that are concerned with rights of victims, as well as the rights of perpetrators. Additionally, he reflected the high cost of recidivism and the affects of incarceration on families. This researcher also intensely deliberated on the role as well as the role of the church as a stakeholder and God-ordained agency for the reconciliation of all men to Him and one another. Furthermore, he thought deeply about the theological foundations compelled the writer to reexamine the scriptural basis and moral requirement of God's people to be the voice of love, forgiveness, and redemption in a world filled with hatred, un-forgiveness and retribution.

This research project afforded the writer the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the ex-offender ministry in his own parish and reconsider its approach to this vital and pressing need. Redesigning the training curriculum prompted the writer to consult with other specialists in the field and draw upon his own background in correctional rehabilitation in order to identify the primary causes of criminal relapse, but more importantly to inform and inspire the church through self-assessment and training. The process was an eye-opening experience for the writer, the congregation, as well as the focus group. The eagerness of the focus group members to participate in the research enhanced the learning experience for everyone involved. Because of the writer's work with offenders, the history of the church's involvement in the correctional ministry and the number of ex-offenders that are members of the congregation, the project was received with openness and excitement.

Several observations were made during the process that will be helpful in the further development of the curriculum and the future promotion of local church involvement in the area of reentry:

- Opinions concerning ex-offender reentry are primarily based on experiences. Individuals who have not had any encounter with the criminal justice system have little or no knowledge about the complexities of the system.

- Stereotypes concerning the reasons people offend and re-offend abound in the church as well as society.

- While many Christians see ministering to prisoners who are incarcerated as the role of the church, a large percentage have not considered the role of the church in their lives after their release.

- Christians as well as non-Christians find it difficult to forgive individuals who are guilty of committing crimes against nature, or against the weak and defenseless (children, women and the elderly).

- Persons who are interested in developing aftercare ministries in their church should plan for take at least twelve weeks to train and educate constituents and utilize the expertise of persons who have experience in the field. The writer discovered during this process that seven week was not an adequate amount of time to provide the kind of training that would fully prepare individuals to implement this ministry model.

- Additionally, for future study the writer would recommend that offenders and ex-offenders be interviewed to ascertain their feelings, thoughts, and needs. The church could greatly benefit from gaining an understanding of the how offenders see the role of the church in their reintegration process, and what their experiences have been with churches. This dialogue could help churches overcome

stereotypes about offenders and it could communicate an attitude of concern and compassion on the part of the church.

If anything is clear from this study, it is the fact that the church must continue to examine its attitude about crime, criminals, punishment, and restoration. A starting point for this examination could be to determine what does being Christian mean in relation to criminal justice? How would Jesus respond to those have offended and are returning to the community? How can the church make the transition and reintegration of ex-offenders and more successful process? How can the church become more informed about this social phenomenon? Finally, the church must remember that it God's only organism, institution and instrument in the world with the message of forgiveness and reconciliation. Therefore, the church can no longer remain silent and indifferent on this matter.

Moreover, this project has rekindled the fire and renewed the passion of the writer for ex-offender reentry ministry. The next step will be to review the seven-week curriculum with the members who are committed to working with the aftercare ministry at Gethsemane Community Fellowship. Secondly, the writer will reform the current ministry with a focus on several components: 1.) Pre-Release interviews and assessments, 2.) Post-release intake and treatment plans, 3.) Mentoring, 4.) Life skills training, 5.) Substance Abuse Support, and 6.) Discipleship and Follow-Up. It is the writer's prayer and plan that this project will become one of many models for local churches to pattern their ministry.

APPENDIX A

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1. Community Demographics

Total Population	Track 47, Norfolk City, Virginia
*Total:	1,915
Race:	
White alone	14
Black or African-American alone	1,877
Gender by Ages:	
Male:	
21 years	76
22 to 24 years	57
25 to 29 years	6
30 to 34 years	26
35 to 39 years	9
40 to 44 years	10
45 to 49 years	30
50 to 54 years	0
55 to 59 years	26
60 and 61 years	0
62 to 64 years	0
65 and 66 years	5
67 to 69 years	4
70 to 74 years	16
75 to 79 years	6
80 to 84 years	0
Female:	
21 years	164
22 to 24 years	133
25 to 29 years	43
30 to 34 years	8
35 o 39 years	3
40 to 44 years	18
45 to 49 years	27
50 to 54 years	5
55 to 59 years	6
60 and 61 years	0
62 to 64 years	9
65 and 66 years	6
67 to 69 years	6
70 to 74 years	11
75 to 79 years	0
80 to 84 years	0

Table 2. Household Types

Household types Living Alone:	Track 47, Norfolk City, Virginia
Householder:	420
Male	23
Female	75
Spouse	22
Child:	147
Natural Born	147
Adopted	0
Step	0
Grandchild	46
Brother or sister	24

Table 3. Profile of Selected Social Characteristics

Subject	Number
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	
Population 3 years and over enrolled	1,572
Nursery school, preschool	6
Kindergarten	0
Elementary schools (grades 1-8)	89
High school	51
College and Graduate school	1,426
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	
Population 25 years and over	285
Less than 9th grade	45
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	86
High School graduate	90
Some college, no degree	32
Associate degree	9
Bachelor's Degree	23
Graduate or professional degree	0
Percent high school graduate or higher	54
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	8
MARITAL STATUS	
Population 15 and over	1,757
Never married	1,320
Now married, except separated	330
Separated	49
Widowed	45
Female	32
Divorced	13

Table 4. Household Income

Household Income	Track 47, Norfolk City, Virginia
Total	154
Less than $10,000	33
$10,000 to $14,999	22
$15,000 to $19,999	24
$20,000 to $24,999	15
$25,000 to $29,999	10
$30,000 to $34,999	12
$35,000 to $39,999	17
$40,000 to $44,999	0
$45,000 to $49,999	0
$50,000 to $54,999	6
$60,000 to $74,999	9
$75,000 to $99,999	6
$100,000 to $124,999	0
$125,000 to $149,999	0
$150,000 to $199,999	0
$200,000 or more	0

APPENDIX B

PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

PRETEST QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Describe what comes to mind when you think of the term ex-offender?

2. Define the term re-entry.

3. When should re-entry planning begin for offenders?

4. What are the most critical needs of offenders?

5. What are the unique critical needs of ex-offenders?

6. What community resources would you use to assist ex-offenders with their housing, employment and life skills needs?

7. What kinds of affects does incarceration have on offenders?

8. What role does mentoring play in the reintegration of ex-offenders into society?

9. What is the difference in empowering and enabling?

10. What unique ability does the church have in serving ex-offenders?

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

February 15, 2006

Dear Member:

As you may know, I am currently enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry Program at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. A doctoral degree represents the highest academic achievement in a given area. In this program, students are equipped for teaching and research in theological schools, colleges, universities, or for the scholarly enhancement of ministerial practice. The purpose of the Doctor of Ministry degree is to enhance the practice of ministry for persons who hold the Master of Divinity degree and have engaged in ministerial leadership. The goal of the degree is an advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry, enhanced competencies in pastoral analysis and ministerial skills, and continues growth and spiritual maturity.

I have just begun Phase IV of the 2 ½ of year program which requires me to implement and test the project I have proposed by the collection and analysis of data, fieldwork and the completion of a formal paper (dissertation). Attached you will find a copy of my project proposal. The project requires a test group of 10-12 individuals who will participate in the following:

1.) A pre-test
2.) Training Curriculum
3.) A post-test

I will make the training as convenient as possible for the participants. Thank you for your consideration.

Thank you,

Pastor Houston

APPENDIX D

CURRICULUM MODULES

Module One
Understanding Ex-Offenders and Their Needs

Objectives: Upon completion of this training module participants will be able to:

1. Identify the affects of incarceration upon ex-offenders.
2. Categorize the physical, social, and emotional needs of ex-offenders.

"Each calendar year, more than one hundred thousand men and women are released from America's prisons and jails. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 60 percent of the people released from prison in a given year will have committed another crime within six months, and 75 percent will have returned to crime in a four-year period. For juvenile delinquents, the failure rate is much higher. Suffice it to say that without assistance from churches, community agencies or individuals who understand and care about the needs and challenges of ex-offenders, the cycle of recidivism is sure to prevail. However, in order to be effective, service and ministry providers must have an understanding of the needs and challenges of ex-offenders."[1]

I.   **Understanding Correctional Culture and Its Impact on the Offender**[2]

    A. The "Inmate Code"

        1. Set of spoken and unspoken rules, established and maintained by the inmates themselves to maximize each inmate's personal safety and power.
        2. Dictates behaviors among inmates and toward staff.
        3. May have the most significant and lasting impact on the individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.
        4. Common Directives are: don't trust anyone; show respect; avoid appearance of weakness; "do your time" which means mind your own business, offer no information to corrections officers, turn a blind eye to violence perpetrated by inmates as well as rule infractions; and "don't be a snitch."
        5. It is important to realize that adherence to the "Code" is not necessarily relinquished after release.

    B. "Prisonization"

        1. The prisonization model, first developed in 1940, holds that the longer inmates are incarcerated, the more "criminalized" and distanced they become from the values and behaviors outside

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[1] Donald Smarto, *Keeping Ex-offenders Free! An Aftercare Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 11.

[2] Gerald Landsberg and Amy Smiley, ed., *Forensic Mental Health: Working with Offenders with Mental Illness* (Kingston, NJ: Civic Research Institute, 2001), 1-4.

prison walls (severity depends upon the length of time incarcerated).

2. Each person brings characteristics of personality and individual history to the experience of incarceration: serious mental illness, character pathology, addictive disorders, trauma histories, cognitive impairments, coping skills, family history, ethnic culture, educational experiences, gender identity, and a host of others.

C. Deprivation

1. Offender's ability to make choices is very restricted. They have no choices regarding clothes or meal selection.
2. Inflexibility and unresponsiveness to the concerns of offenders often results from bureaucratic indifference.
3. The rules, commands and decisions that are imposed on inmates are not accompanied by explanations. This kind of treatment poses a profound threat to the offender's self-image by reducing

D. Environmental Factors
1. Correctional facilities differ in their physical, social and psychological environments. Each facility is unique.

   a. Jail - short term detention for individuals awaiting court proceedings or those with limited sentences, vary according to population. The future may be uncertain for some inmates; tomorrow may bring anything from a life sentence to release. There are high levels of anxiety, little incentive to control or modulate behavior; extremely stressful/ explosive for those suffering from mental illness.

   b. Prison - convicted felons serving more than 12 months. Two ratings: 1) security (maximum, medium, or minimum) based on inmate's crime and/or length of sentence and 2) mental health indicate level of psychiatric services needed. Most comprehensive psychological services are at maximum security prisons so inmate may be at max facility not because of crime but because of seriousness of illness. Thus persons with most severe psychological conditions housed with the worst felons.

2. Constant monitoring--Corrections staff monitor and manage inmate movement and activity every moment of the day.

   a. New arrivals must learn the rules and regulations specific to the facility to which they are assigned.

        b. Rule infractions can result in increasing penalties that may range from suspension of privileges to solitary confinement.

    3. Social pressures--correctional facilities contain a pervasive atmosphere of threat and danger, where only the strong survive.

        a. Intimidation, gambling, extortion, drug trafficking, and organizations (or gangs) are widespread.

        b. Inmates understandably experience increased fear and exhibit heightened vigilance.

II.   Immediate Needs

A. Physical
1. Shelter
    a. 30-50% of exiting offenders are homeless upon release (source-From Prison to Home)
    b. Housing options

        1. Transitional Homes
        2. Emergency shelters- should only be used as a last resort as they often have environments that are not conducive to ex-offender's development.

2. Food
3. Clothing
4. Medical Treatment (Module 7)
5. Substance Abuse Treatment (Module 7)

B. Social
1. Fellowship, Interpersonal Skills
2. Spiritual Guidance and Mentoring
3. Community and Social supports

C. Emotional Needs
1. Low self-esteem, fear, and hopelessness
2. Trust Issues
3. Anger management
4. Conflict resolution

III.   Secondary Needs

A. Education

      1. Educational background of ex-offenders
      2. Literacy levels of ex-offenders
          a. 19% of incarcerated adults are functionally illiterate (U.S. Dept. of Education.
          b. 11% rate of learning disability in adult correctional facilities.

      3. Access to educational opportunities while incarcerated
      4. Impact of limited education and low-literacy on employment options.

B. Employment and/or Vocational Training- goal is to gain suitable employment to enable the ex-offender to care for self and family not just to get a job and be done. "An inadequate job can sometimes be just as bad as no job at all"--*Equipping Your Church to Minister to Ex-Offenders*, p.19

      1. 50% of incarcerated persons were unemployed prior to incarceration.
      2. The stigma of a criminal record can also influence the type of job opportunities that convicted felons have access to. Many employers are hesitant or unwilling to hire ex-convicts and parolees, regardless of their job-related experience, because of their criminal background.
      3. Training opportunities
          a. Skills training
          b. Vocational
      4. Transportation to and from interviews
      5. Resume preparation
      6. Interview skills
      7. Interview clothing
      8. Legal documents necessary for job search such as: social security card, birth certificate, high school diploma or GED, DD214 veterans of Armed Forces

C. Transportation
D. Marriage counseling
E. Parenting skills

Module Two
Conducting Assessments/Screening[3]

Objectives: Upon completion of this training module participants will be able to:

I. What is an assessment?

    A. Definition- process of gathering and organizing all necessary data and information in order to arrive at an accurate picture of the participant's situation

    B. Assessment in the planned change process

    C. Difference between application/intake and assessment

    D. Importance of a proper and comprehensive assessment

II. Goals of assessment

    A. To establish a clear understanding of the participant's needs, problems or situations impeding or affecting, their re-entry into mainstream society.

        1. Immediate Needs
        2. Secondary Needs

    B. To recognize the strengths, assets, skills and abilities that the participant brings to the minister/worker-participant relationship.

        1. Persistence and determination
        2. Spiritual grounding, faith tradition
        3. Motivation
        4. Intelligence
        5. Commitment to others
        6. Willingness to change, openness
        7. Personal transformation
        8. Family, community support

    C. To formulate a clear description of those who will be blessed by and benefit from the participant's complete transformation.

        1. Family
        2. Community
        3. Body of Christ/God's kingdom
        4. At-risk youth
        5. Other ex-offenders

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[3] Karen K. Kirst-Ashman and Grafton H. Hull, Jr., *Understanding Generalist Practice* (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 2002), 148.

D. To identify missing information that is necessary or important for better understanding how to assist the ex-offender.

1. Birth certificate
2. Photo identification
3. Social security card
4. DD214 (ex-military)
5. Medical examination details

E. To compile all gathered information in order to formulate a ministry plan.

1. Provide guidelines for preparing participant for re-entry.
2. Helps to prioritize different aspects of participant's situation.

III. Engagement

A. First contact between worker/lay minister and participant.

1. Point where lay minister and participant first meet and begin to identify participant needs.
2. Most important step in the assessment process because it is critically important to the eventual outcome of the helping relationship between the ministry/program and the participant.
3. Subsequent steps are dependent upon the ministry-participant relationship established during engagement.
4. Sets the stage for each of the following steps in the planned change process.

B. Common engagement activities and actions

1. Greeting participants in a way that encourages them to talk with you:

   ii. Offer your hand and a seat
   iii. Address participant using their full name rather than automatically assuming they want to be addressed informally
   iv. Use open ended questions throughout so that the participant may elaborate in their responses

2. Demonstrating effective attending skills:

   i. Calls for recognition of both verbal and nonverbal communication.

      1. Goals of attending skills

         a. Enhanced understanding between the lay minister and the participant.

        b. To communicate to participants the lay minister's interest in them and the minister's willingness to explore both feelings and thoughts.

    ii. Allows lay minister to focus both on the participant's thoughts and feelings.

3. Active listening

4. Maintaining eye contact

5. Pay close attention to ensure to determine whether minister's responses and actions are facilitating or discouraging the participant's communications

6. Open ended questioning:

    i. Gives participants an opportunity to discuss and expand upon their thoughts and feelings.
    ii. This is not a time to draw conclusions but rather a time to understand the participant.
    iii. Use close-ended questions to gather data such as birth dates, ages, and addresses or when trying to pin down exactly what a participant wants.

7. Allow silence to provide the participant time to think about your questions or comments.

8. Explain that you will need to take notes but be careful not to let the note taking distract either the minister or the participant from the main task.

9. Discussing ministry and church services and participant expectations

    i. Helps participants realistically assess whether ministry/program and minister will be able to help the participant.

        1. Describe as accurately as possible the services offered by the ministry, any costs involved, possible length of services, ministry expectations.

        2. Screening- if the ministry's services do not match the participant needs, the lay minister should help to make the appropriate referral to a more suitable ministry, agency or organization.

10. Explaining the helping process

    i. Explain that there are no magic answers; practitioner and participant will work together to help resolve the participant's situation

    ii. Part of the function of the helping relationship is to explore, locate or build additional resources and to help the participant to draw upon these for problem resolution

    iii. Inform participant of the rules and regulations of the ministry as well as laws, policies and professional ethical standards so that participants are aware of their rights.

    iv. Never promise complete confidentiality; let participants know their communications may be shared with the pastor, law enforcement agency or others as needed.

IV. Issues/Problems

A. Family conflicts

B. Psychological and Behavioral problems (to be addressed in module 7)

C. Inadequate Resources

D. Problems in Decision Making Skills

V. Conducting a basic assessment

Step 1: Greet the client.

Step 2: Demonstrate effective attending skills.

Step 3: Discuss ministry services and client expectations.

Step 4: Decide whether the ministry can help.

Step 5: Offer ministry services to the client.

Step 6: Orient client to helping process.

Step 7: Complete required forms and reports.

Module Three
Discipleship for Ex-Offenders

Objectives: Upon completion of this training module participants will:

1.   Be able to recognize the spiritual needs of ex-offenders.
2.   Be able to design a discipleship program for ex-offenders.
3.   Be equipped with the basic skills for discipleship training.

"By far, the important aspect of the ex-offenders life is his/her relationship with Christ. While physical, social and emotional needs are tremendously important, it is the individual's relationship with Jesus Christ that will lead to total and complete transformation. Fortunately, many offenders accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and are born again while in jail or prison, and begin their Christian lives long before their release. Some take advantage of the ministries that are available in the penal institutions (worship, bible study, and correspondence courses), while others may remain "babes" in their faith development. Still others are searching for spiritual direction upon their release. After release from incarceration they will encounter many temptations to fall back into their previous lifestyle, manipulation, instant gratification, fellowshipping with old acquaintances, criminal activities and other self-destructive behaviors. Additionally, many of them have been exposed to many conflicting belief systems and may not be thoroughly grounded in scripture and sound doctrine. For these reasons and more, following Christ is a daily struggle and the ex-offenders will need careful shepherding by the local church. The vital role of the church in discipling converts cannot be overstated. What is discipleship? Discipleship is helping a believer through the various stages of spiritual development into maturity. As the church endeavors to provide a discipleship ministry for ex-offenders several factors must be considered. We must first consider the current level of Christian maturity. The training curriculum "Beyond Bars: Launching a Restoration Ministry" describes four levels of growth that might be considered.

BABY [Helpless]
"I am writing to you, little [infants], because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." (1 John 2:12)

CHILD [Needing teaching and discipline]
"I have written to you children, because you know the father." (1 John 2:13)

ADOLESCENT [Beginning to take on responsibility]
"I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one." (1 John 2:14b)"[4]

ADULT [Able to take on responsibilities and privileges which will enhance continued growth.

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[4] Ron Dooley, *Beyond Bars: Launching a Restoration Ministry* (Sharpsburg, GA: Here's Life Inner City Prison Ministry, 2004).

I have written to you fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning."
(*1 John 2:14a*)

Determining the spiritual maturity of the individuals can assist teachers in identifying where to begin the process.

DISCIPLESHIP OUTLINE[5]

I.   **Christian Basics**

    A. Understanding God

God is the creator and sustainer of the universe who has provided mankind with a revelation of himself through the natural world and through His Son, Jesus Christ. God may be described in terms of attributes. An attribute is an inherent characteristic of a person or being. While we cannot describe God in a comprehensive way, we can learn about him by examining His attributes as revealed in the Bible.

    1. The first group is known as the natural attributes of God. They are the attributes that God does not share in common with mankind.

        a. God is a Spirit (*John 4:24*)
        b. God Never Changes (*Hebrews 1:12*)
        c. God Is All Powerful (*Isaiah 40:27-31*)
        d. God Is All Knowing
        e. God Is Everywhere (*Psalm 139:7-12*)
        f. God Is Eternal (*Revelations 1:8*)

    2. The second group of attributes is called moral attributes.

        a. God Is Holy (*Isaiah 6:1-3*)
        b. God Is Righteous (*Genesis 18:25, Romans 1:16-17*)
        c. God Is Love
        d. God Is Truth
        e. God Is Wisdom

    B. Understanding Jesus

    C. Understanding Holy Spirit

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[5] Dell Coats Erwin, *Prison Discipleship Series* (Merrifield, VA: Prison Fellowship, 2005).

The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Godhead (trinity), who exercises the power of the Father and the Son in creation and redemption. He is also the power by which Christians are brought to faith and helped to understand their walk with God.

     1.   The Holy Spirit's Identity (*John 14:16-17a*)
     2.   The Holy Spirit's Indwelling (*John 14:18*)
     3.   The Holy Spirit's Impact (*John 14:26*)

D. Understanding Humankind

     1.   The Dignity of Man (*Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139*)
     2.   The Duty of Man (*Gen 2:15, Ecclesiastes 12:13*)
     3.   The Destiny of Man (*Jeremiah 29:10*)

E. Understanding Salvation

The term "saved" means to deliver, make well, give health, or give wholeness. Salvation means to be set free from sin, from sin's power and from God's punishment.

     1. The Problem (*Romans 3:23, Isaiah 53:6, I John 1:8*)
     2. The Plan (*Galatians 4:4, Romans 5:6-9, 10:9-13*)
     3. The Pardon (*Isaiah 55:7, I John 1:9, Romans 8:1*)
     4. The Promise (*John 3:16, John 1:12, 13*)

F. Understanding Baptism

Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water as a sign of his previous entrance into the communion of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Baptism was instituted by Christ (Matthew 28:19), practiced by the Apostles (Acts 2:38), submitted to by the New Testament Church (Romans 6:3) and subsequently practiced as a rite by the Christian church.

     1. Illustration (*Romans 6:3*)
     2. Identification (*Romans 6:4*)
     3. Implication (*Romans 6:5*)

II.   Spiritual Disciplines

     A.   Prayer (*Matthew 7:7, Luke 18:1, I Thessalonians 5:17*)
     B.   Fellowship (*Acts 2:42, Hebrews 10:25*)
     C.   Worship (*Psalms 95:6, 96:9*)
     D.   Studying the Word (*I Peter 2:2, I Timothy*)
     E.   Forgiving Others (*Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13, Luke 17:4*)

F.   Loving Others (*John 13:35, Matthew 22:39, I Peter 1:22*)

III.   Living as Overcomers (Book 4)

A. Overcoming Temptation (*Proverbs 1:10, Ephesians 6:13, 2 Peter 3:17*)
B. Overcoming Fear (*2 Timothy 1:7, Isaiah 12:2*)
C. Overcoming Worry (*Matthew 6:31, Philippians 4:6*)
D. Overcoming Stress (*1 Peter 5:7*)
E. Overcoming Anger (*Proverbs 14:17, Proverbs 19:11, James 1:19*)

Module Four
Collaborative Partnerships & Resource Identification[6]

Objectives: Upon the completion of this training module participants will be able to:

1. Identify and access community resources related to the needs of ex-offenders.
2. Develop collaborative relationships between the church and community agencies.

Brokering is the linking of client systems to needed resources. Such resources can target a broad range of client needs.

The social worker often plays the broker role by helping clients assess their needs and locating appropriate resources to meet those needs. Once the resource is identified, the worker connects the client to that resource through a referral. Finally, the worker evaluates with the client the effectiveness of the resource in meeting the client's needs.

THE EFFECTIVE BROKER

Becoming an effective broker requires more than simply memorizing the names of available agencies. First, it requires knowledge of agency eligibility criteria. Second, it necessitates familiarity with many different kinds of resource systems (e.g., emergency housing, food pantries, TANF). Third, it requires that the worker develop a network of contact people to whom the client may be referred. You must also know who can and will give your client the most help.

Maintaining familiarity with eligibility criteria can be a difficult task because the criteria are often changing. New regulations, policies and procedures, and legislation all affect eligibility in different agencies.

I.   **The Importance of Knowing Resources**

      A.   Eligibility Criteria of Resource Agencies

            1.   Know the eligibility/suitability requirements
            2.   What services are provided
            3.   Match specific needs/issues to the appropriate services
            4.   Maintain accurate and current agency data
            5.   Design a resource list of service providers

      B.   Characteristics of Resource Agencies

            1. The degree of flexibility regarding the rules
            2. The level of available resources [i.e., food, funds, etc.]

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[6] Karen K. Kirst-Ashman and Grafton H. Hull, Jr., *Understanding Generalist Practice* (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 2002), 496.

3. The frequency at which one can receive services [time/week]
4. Hours of operation
5. Number of times an individual may receive assistance within a 12-month period.

C.   Contact Persons in Resource Agencies

1. Research the Service Providers in your community
2. Make personal face-to-face contact with the staff of each agency
3. Ensure that your entire team has knowledge of available resources
4. Network - Participate in community activities to build awareness of available services and providers.

D.   Community Resource Directories
E.   Local telephone books
F.   Internet
G.   Referral and Information Services
H.   Local Service Organization and Clubs

VI.   Helping the Client Select the Best Resource System

A.   Refer the client to an existing service
B.   Provide the resource yourself
C.   Create a resource by targeting one that come close to meeting the client's needs

VII.   Making the Referral

A.   Offer as many resources as possible
B.   Give complete agency information [name, address, phone number, contact person]
C.   Set up the appointment for the client
D.   Have authorization to share information client information
E.   Avoid creating unnecessary dependency

VIII.   Helping the Client Use the Resource System

A.   Provide a written referral detailing client's needs
B.   Give the client detailed information about the agency
C.   Go over the details prior to the appointment to element misunderstandings

IX.   Follow-up and Evaluation of Resource System

A.   Contact the client or instruct them to contact you with a designated time
B.   Schedule a follow-up appointment
C.   Follow-up with the agency staff member
D.   Determine whether or not the referral met the needs of the client

Module Five
Mentoring

Objectives: Upon completion of this module participants will be able to:

1. State reasons that ex-offenders need mentoring.
2. Describe ways a mentor can help ex-offenders.
3. Apply mentoring skills in healthy and appropriate mentor – mentoree relationships.

For the ministry of mentoring in an aftercare setting to be effective in the restoration of souls, mentoring must be designed and implemented according to biblical principles. Mentoring in the Christian context is founded upon one of the elements of spiritual change. The ultimate source of change and growth is the Holy Spirit and the word of God. However, the Lord also uses the "Body of Christ" (the human element) to assist in growth and development. That is the place of mentoring. Embracing God's plan for change is crucial for mentors understanding and accepting their roles as change agents.

Mentoring is a relational process between mentor, who knows or has experienced something and transfers that something (information, wisdom, experience, confidence, insight, etc.) to a mentoree, at an appropriate time and manner, so that it facilitates development or empowerment.

Mentoring is an empowering experience that requires a connection between two people...the mentor and the mentoree. Factors such as time, proximity, needs, shared values, and goals affect any relationship. But the mentoring relationship needs three additional factors, or dynamics to bring about empowerment. These dynamics are constantly at play in the context of the mentoring relationship and directly affect the mentoree's progress, change, and level of empowerment.

V. The Reasons Ex-Offenders Need Mentoring

    A. To provide Support and Encouragement
    B. To Establish healthy relationships
    C. To Help them develop and maintain focus
    D. To Build Social Skills

VI. Ways a Mentor can Help Ex-Offenders

    A. Act as a resource for channeling networking opportunities
    B. Assist with Good Decisions Making]
    C. Provide a "friendly ear" to vent frustrations
    D. Be supportive without becoming an enabler
    E. Model good behavior and character
    F. Act as an Accountability Partner

VII. How to Build Healthy and Appropriate Mentor/Mentoree Relationships

A. Pair Individuals who have things in common

1. Gender
2. Time/schedules
3. Marital status
4. Age or generational similarities
5. Likes/Dislikes

➢ Maintain Appropriate Boundaries
➢ Watch for Dependence and Codependency

Module Six
Empowering Ex-Offenders

Objectives: Upon the completion of this training module participants will be able to:

1. Design a Life-Skills curriculum that empowers the ex-offender for successful independent living.
2. Describe the 5 stages of change.

Have you ever thought about the hundreds of decisions an individual makes daily? These decisions range from what they will eat or wear to how they will spend their time or money. Most of this decision-making is so habitual until they virtually go unnoticed, because it has become a part of our sub-conscious existence. As a result, many of us think very little of the skill level that is required to make healthy life-decisions on a consistent basis.

How do we acquire such skills? Normally, these skills are learned and acquired from our families of origin. Children that are raised in homes where they are equipped with good decision-making tools are more likely to make good decisions as adults. However, children that are not taught basic problem-solving skills, conflict-resolution skills, money or time management skills, are less likely to acquire them without formal training or instruction.

This is one of the greatest challenges facing ex-offenders. We have discussed in the previous modules how incarceration affects individuals, and the high percentage of offenders that have dysfunctional family backgrounds. These factors and more affirm the fact the one of the most important needs that ex-offenders have is Life-Skills Training.
Life-skills can be simply defined as "basic skills that are necessary to live a healthy and productive life." As a result of the controlling, regimented nature of penal institutions, persons who are incarcerated are not given the responsibility to make normal daily decisions. Offenders do not decide what time to get out of bed, what they will eat or wear, or how they will spend their day. Their decision-making options in either of these areas are minimal at best. Consequently, their decision-making ability is weakened and skills must be learned and strengthened upon their release. Furthermore, many offenders have not been exposed to basic life-skills in their families, schools, or penal institution. Oftentimes, the acquisition and application of these skills can be the determining factor in the ex-offenders progress toward a crime-free, productive lifestyle.

This module is designed to provide a suggested curriculum that can aid after-care program/ministries in empowering ex-offenders with the basic life-skills necessary to become a productive, law-abiding citizen.

I. Developing a Healthy Self-Concept

    A. Describe what makes up your self-concept.
    B. Recognize how your self-concept influences your behavior.
    C. Identify the forces that shape your self-concept.

II. Decision Making

    A. Recognize how you control the shape of your life through decisions.
    B. Explain how values, goals, and resources influence management decisions.
    C. Identify and clarify your needs and values.
    D. Use your values, goals, and standards to become a better decision maker.

III. Communicating Effectively

    A. Describe effective communication practices.
    B. Explain how good communication is used in resolving conflict.

IV. Managing Your Health

    A. Identify life-style decisions that affect your health.
    B. Explain how good eating habits, exercise, and rest affect your health.

V. Coping with Stress

    A. Explain what stress is and common reactions to stress.
    B. Describe the causes and symptoms of stress.
    C. Apply personal skills for effective stress management.

VI. Managing Finances

    A. Explain the importance of a budget.
    B. Demonstrate steps in developing a budget.
    C. Understand and manage a bank account.
    D. Understand restitution and payment plans for court costs and fines.

VII. Employment & Career Planning

    A. Identify the benefits of legal employment.
    B. Conduct an assessment of their personal career interests, aptitude, skills and abilities.
    C. Prepare documents needed in a job search (to include resumes, applications, and cover letters)

D. Demonstrate effective job interviewing skills.
E. List methods for conducting a job search.

VIII. Making It on Supervision

A. List the standard conditions of supervision as well as some possible special conditions.
B. Identify reasons that offenders on supervision are violated and describe how the violation process works.

Note: Churches should consider inviting a local probation or parole officer to facilitate this session.

IX. Parenting Skills
A. Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of their unique roles and responsibilities as a parent.
B. Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the emotional impact that their incarceration has had on their children.
C. Identify strategies for transitioning back into the lives of their children.

X. Developing Successful Relationships
A. Explain the importance and benefits of healthy relationships.
B. Analyze the importance of respect, trust, responsibility and openness in relationships.

The Five Stages of Change

Much research has been completed on the ways people change. Studies have proven that people can make major life-style changes even when habits are deeply rooted in a person's daily activities. The key centers on the person being motivated to change and making the effort to follow a plan for change.

STAGES OF CHANGE

1. **Pre-contemplation Stage:** An individual is not thinking about changing the way they think or act. They are in denial and do not have a problem with their behavior.

2. **Contemplation Stage**: The individual is starting to think about negative consequences that his irresponsible criminal behavior is having on his life.

3. **Preparation Stage**: The individual is making a plan and taking steps toward changing his irresponsible and criminal behavior.

4.   **Action Stage:** The individual had implemented the plans designed in the preparation stage.

5.   **Maintenance Stage**: The individual has been living crime free for a significant period of time, and is continuing to examine habits and thought patterns to prevent a relapse into old practice.

Module Seven
Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse[7]

Objectives: Upon completion of this training module participants will be able to:

1. State the various health challenges that are prevalent among ex-offenders.
2. Identify community resources that provide health, mental health and substance abuse services

Prisoners have significantly more medical and mental health problems than the general population, because they often live as transients or in crowded conditions, tend to be economically disadvantaged, and have high rates of substance abuse, including intravenous drug use. While in prison, inmates have State-provided health care, but upon release most cannot easily obtain health care. In recent years, escalating health care costs, high incarceration rates and, in particularly, the appearance of HIV and AIDS have made the health care of prisoners and soon-to-be-released prisoners a major policy and public health issue.

I. Physical Health Issues among Ex-offenders

A. Alcohol - Alcohol goes directly into the bloodstream, physically affecting the whole body. Some illnesses and health problems caused by alcohol include:

1. **Hangovers**. Headaches, nausea, vomiting, aches and pains all result from drinking too much. Drinking to the point of drunkenness makes you sick.

2. **Weight gain**. Alcohol is not water. A beer has about 150 "empty" calories that provide few if any nutrients.

3. **High blood pressure**. Along with being overweight, high blood pressure is associated with many serious health problems.

4. **Depressed immune system**. *Impaired immunity* makes you more likely to contract viral illnesses such as flu and infections.

5. **Cancer**. 2-4% of all cancer cases are related to alcohol. Upper digestive tract cancers are the most common, hitting the esophagus, mouth, larynx, and pharynx. Women who drink prior to menopause are more likely to develop breast cancer. Your risk of skin cancer doubles if you drink slightly more than "moderate levels." Some studies implicate alcohol in colon, stomach, and pancreas and lung cancer. And let's not forget the liver.

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[7] U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, *Profile of Jail Inmates, 2002,* report prepared by Doris J. James, 2004.

6. **Liver disease**. Heavy drinking can cause <u>fatty liver</u>, <u>hepatitis</u>, <u>cirrhosis</u> and cancer of the liver. The liver breaks down alcohol at the rate of only one drink per hour.

7. **Alcohol poisoning**. Drinking large amounts can result in alcohol poisoning, which causes unconsciousness and even death. Breathing slows, and the skin becomes cold and may look blue. Don't let a person in this condition "sleep it off." Call 911.

8. **Heart or respiratory failure**. Excessive drinking can have serious results. <u>Heart</u> or respiratory failure often means death.

STATISTICS

- 66.0% of prison inmates in 2002 drank alcohol regularly and 33.4% drank alcohol at the times of the offense.
- 82.2% of prison inmates in 2002 had used drugs at least once during their l lifetime, 68.7% used drugs regularly, and 28.8% of convicted inmates had used drugs at the time of the offense.
- 49.7% of convicted inmates were using either drugs or alcohol at the time of their offense.

B. Heart Disease - Overall, inmates and low-income populations have a disproportionate burden of death and disability from CVD. African Americans have the highest rate of high blood pressure of all groups and tend to develop it younger than others. Studies have shown that socioeconomic status, reflected in income and education, underlie a substantial portion, but not all, of the higher rate of heart disease in minority populations.

C. Diabetes - Diabetes was the sixth leading cause of death in the year 2000. More than 17 million Americans have diabetes, and over 200,000 people die each year of related complications. Diabetes is a group of diseases described by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin secretion, insulin action, or both. This disease can cause serious complications and premature death, but persons with diabetes can take measures to reduce the likelihood of such occurrences. This disease is prevalent among inmates, low-income, Blacks and low-income populations

D. HIV/AIDS - HIV infection is the fifth leading cause of death for people who are 25-44 years old in the United States, and is the leading cause of death for African-American men ages 35-44. Overall estimates are that 850,000 to 950,000 U.S. residents are living with HIV infection, one-quarter of who are unaware of their infection. Approximately 40,000 new HIV infections occur each year in the United States, and approximately 5 million new HIV cases occur each year worldwide.

STATISTICS

- Between 1998 and 2002 the number of HIV-positive prisoners increased about 7% while the overall prison population grew almost 11%
- At year end 2002, 3.0% of all female state prison inmates were HIV positive prisoners, and 23 States reported an increase
- In 2002 the overall rate of confirmed AIDS in the prison population (0.48%) was nearly 3 1/2 times the rate in the U.S. general population (0.14%)
- Among jail inmates in 2002 who had ever been tested for HIV, Hispanics (2.9%) were more than 3 times as likely as whites (0.8% and twice as likely as blacks (1.2%) to report being HIV positive.
- Among jail inmates reporting past drug use, 1.5% were HIV positive; of those who had used a needle to inject drugs, 3.2%; and of those who had shared a needle with others, 7.5%

E. Physical/Mental Health - At midyear 1998, an estimated 283,800 mentally ill offenders were incarcerated in the Nation's prisons and jails. In recent surveys completed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 16% of State prison inmates, 7% of Federal inmates and 16% of those in local jails reported either a mental condition or an overnight stay in a mental hospital. About 16%, or an estimated 547,800 probationers, said they had had a mental condition or stayed overnight in a mental hospital at some point in their lifetime.

STATISTICS

- About 10% of prison and jail inmates reported a mental or emotional condition; and 10% said they had stayed overnight in a mental hospital or program.
- About 53% of mentally ill inmates were in prison for a violent offense, compared to 46% of other inmates.
- Mentally ill offenders were less likely than others to be incarcerated for a drug-related offense (13% versus 22%)
- Mentally ill State prison inmates were more than twice as likely as other inmates to report living on the street or in a helter in the 12 months prior to arrest (20% compared to 9%)
- Nearly 8 in 10 female mentally ill inmates reported physical or sexual abuse. Males with a mental condition were more than twice as likely as other males to report abuse.
- In 1997, 16.2% of state prison inmates said they had a mental or emotional problem or had spent a night in a mental health facility. Sixty percent of these said they had received some sort of treatment since being admitted to prison.
- That same year. 18.9% of state prison inmates reported that they were taking medications for mental or emotional disorders.

F. Clinical Depression - Anyone can have clinical depression. However, cultural background plays a large role in how the symptoms of depression are reported

and interpreted, and consequently, if and how clinical depression is recognized and treated. But clinical depression is never normal and should not be accepted as a normal part of life. Regardless of age or life situation clinical depression is a serious medical illness affecting more than 19 million American adults each year, but one that can be effectively treated. In fact, more than 80% of people with depression can be treated successfully with medication, psychotherapy or a combination of both.

1. Symptoms of Clinical Depression Among Ex-Offenders

    i. Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood
    ii. Sleeping too much or too little, middle of the night or early morning waking
    iii. Reduced appetite and weight loss, or increased appetite and weight gain
    iv. Loss of pleasure and interest in activities once enjoyed, including sex
    v. Restlessness, irritability
    vi. Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment (such as chronic pain or digestive disorders)
    vii. Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
    viii. Fatigue or loss of energy
    ix. Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless
    x. Thoughts of suicide or death

2. Reasons for Misdiagnosis of Depression Among Ex-Offenders - Depression often has been misdiagnosed among ex-offenders. Factors that can contribute to fewer being diagnosed with clinical depression include:

    i. A mistrust of medical health professionals, based in part on historical higher   than-average institutionalization for African Americans with mental illness.
    ii. Cultural barriers, influenced by language and values in the relationship between the doctor and the patient.
    iii. Reliance on the support of family and the religious community, rather than mental health professionals, during periods of emotional distress.
    iv. A "masking" of depressive symptoms by other medical conditions, somatic complaints, substance abuse and other psychiatric illnesses.
    v. Socioeconomic factors, such as limited access to medical care.

3. African American Attitudes Towards Depression - According to a National Mental Health Association survey on attitudes and beliefs about depression:

i. Approximately 63% of African Americans believe that depression is a "personal weakness," compared to the overall survey average of 54%.

ii. Only 31% of African Americans said they believed depression is a "health" problem.

iii. Close to 30% of African Americans said they would "handle it" (depression) themselves if they were depressed, while close to 20% said they would seek help for depression from friends and family.

iv. Only one in four African Americans recognize that a change in eating habits and sleeping patterns are a sign of depression; only 16% recognize irritability as a sign.

v. Only one-third of African Americans said they would take medication for depression, if prescribed by a doctor, compared to 69% of the general population.

vi. Almost two-thirds of respondents said they believe prayer and faith alone will successfully treat depression "almost all of the time" or "some of the time.

II. Identifying Community Resource and Brokerages Opportunity

Churches constitute a major institutional presence in the United States. The majority of laity "believes that part of the church's mission is to liberate individuals from economic, political, and physical suffering. Because of the prevalence of churches and the active pattern attendance, churches are regarded as indispensable participants in the current national and worldwide faith and health movement. Health professionals and the general public recognize that science and technology are limited in addressing the broad spectrum of health and ethical issues that people currently face. Churches have a special stake as partners in this movement because of people continuing "struggle for life" in a society that has often given less than adequate care to them.

The partnership of churches in the broader faith and health movement does not come without challenges. Partnership requires them to gain the fullest possible awareness of critical health and well-being issues confronting the ex-offenders community, awareness of the overall role of the churches in the movement and awareness of the dimensions of health and well-being. Such awareness provides a basis for determining the healing practices that the churches can best implement.

Churches that provide ministry to Ex-offenders have a greater responsibility to broker with community health agency to provide the appropriate resources needed to ex-offenders who may have physical and/or mental health challenges. It is of up most important that churches can identify specific community agencies in their locale to refer individuals for help that they can not provide. It is even more important that churches develop partnering relationship with these organizations.

Churches have the opportunity to go on line to sites such as www.healthfinder.gov to locate national, state and local health agency to assistance them in working with their clients.

Some worldwide organizations that play a major role in the health care needs of individuals are:

- The National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Cancer Information Service (CIS) is a national resource for information and education about cancer. The CIS operates a toll-free telephone service, 1-800-4-CANCER

- The CDC National Prevention Information Network (NPIN) is the U.S. reference, referral, and distribution service for information on HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) and tuberculosis

- The HRSA Information Center is a nationwide point of entry for publications, resources and referrals on health care services for low-income, uninsured individuals and those with special health care

- AIDS info is a central resource for current information on federally and privately funded clinical trials for AIDS patients and others infected with HIV. AIDS clinical trials evaluate experimental drug

- Advocates for Youth, formerly The Center for Population Options (CPO) is a national organization that focuses on adolescents as the critical group to reach with information on reproductive health

- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is an international fellowship of men and women who share their experiences with each other, so that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcohol

- The American Cancer Society (ACS) was originally established as the American Society for the Control of Cancer in 1913, and became the ACS in 1945. ACS is the voluntary organization dedicated to elimination

- AmFAR is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the support of AIDS research (both basic-biomedical and clinical research), AIDS prevention, and the advocacy of sound AIDS-related public policy.

- Families Worldwide is a non-denominational organization dedicated to eradicating alcohol and substance abuse. The organization's mission is to strengthen families around the world through supporting

- The Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute founded in 1984 was established to address the need for a national resource and training center that focused directly and specifically on family violence

APPENDIX E

SERMON OUTLINES

SERIES: THE CHURCH'S RETURN POLICY
SERMON 1: RISKY BUSINESS
ST. LUKE 15:20

Proposition: The business of receiving or accepting individuals that have violated the community's trust can be risky business. The love of God demonstrated by the father in this parable provides the church with a model for our response to ex-offenders.

I.   The father ran to the son, when he could have run away from him.
    A. The father could have run from the son out of fear.
    B. The father could have run from the son out of frustration.

    Instead, the father ran to his son because of his:
    C. Concern
    D. Compassion

II.   The father hugged him, when he could have hated him.

    The father could have hated the son for
    A. Taking advantage of his generosity.
    B. Abusing the father's love.

    The father hugged the son because he was:
    A. Motivated by mercy.
    B. Governed by grace.

III.   The father received him, when he could have rejected him.

SERMON 2: REENTRY GOD'S WAY
ST. LUKE 15:22

Proposition: The two basic categories of human need are the natural and spiritual. Ministry to ex-offenders must take into consideration the natural (physical) and spiritual (emotional) needs of the individual. The father's response to the son upon his return home is a powerful paradigm for this mandate.

I. Reconciliation – this process attends to the spiritual and emotional needs of the ex-offender. (See Chapter 3 of this document.)

II. Restoration – this process considers the physical needs of the ex-offender. The father supplies food, clothes and shelter. Although these items may have symbolic value in the parable, they also meet a very practical need.

III. Reception – the reception prepared by the servants of the father gives the community an opportunity to partner in the process of restoration, and move the ex-offender back into fellowship with the family and the community.

SERMON 3: WHAT ABOUT ME?
ST. LUKE 15:25-32

Proposition: There is a wide range of feelings, emotions, and philosophies associated with the treatment of ex-offenders in light of the victim's rights. This issue has prompted many spiritual and political debates. This portion of the parable gives a glance into the window of the older brother's soul, as he tries to process the father's generous love for his deviant brother.

1. The older brother demonstrates his indignation at the father's celebration. (Luke 15:28a)

2. The father expresses the importance of the older brother's participation. (Luke 15:28b)

3. The older brother explains his attitude concerning the father's actions. (Luke 15:29-30)

4. The father explains his actions. (Luke 15:31-32)

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